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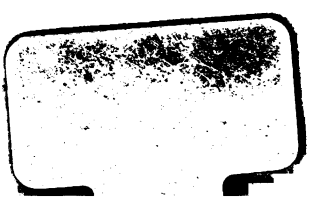

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MEMOIRS

OF THE REIGN OF

BOSSA AHÁDEE,

KING OF DAHOMY,

&c. &c.

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MEMOIRS

OF THE REIGN OF

BOSSA AHÁDEE,

KING OF DAHOMY,

An INLAND COUNTRY of GUINEY.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,

THE AUTHOR's JOURNEY

To *ABOMEY*, THE CAPITAL;

AND

A SHORT ACCOUNT

Of the AFRICAN SLAVE TRADE.

By ROBERT NORRIS.

ILLUSTRATED WITH A NEW MAP.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR W. LOWNDES, No. 77, FLEET-STREET.

M.DCC.LXXXIX.

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RHODES HOUSE
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Extract of a Letter from the Author to the Editor.

" I Wiſh the manuſcript which you have been at the trouble of peruſing, were more deſerving of the public attention; but the fact is, that amidſt the indiſpenſible avocations of buſineſs, one has very little time, during an occaſional reſidence in *Africa*, to beſtow attention upon the hiſtory, either natural or political, of that country; and the ſtupidity of the natives is an inſuperable barrier againſt the inquirer's information.

After your preſſing intreaties, I cannot with-hold my conſent to its being printed; and although I have no ambition for *my name* to appear, yet, if you judge it at all neceſſary, *to eſtabliſh the credibility of the facts related*, you are at liberty to make what uſe you pleaſe of it.

I could not eaſily avoid, in my narrative, the terms *king*, *general*, *palace*, and the like, and be intelligible to the *Engliſh* reader. For example: what I call *palace*,

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is, in the language of the country, *ſimbomy*; which (literally tranſlated) means, a *big houſe*. This might have ſounded aukwardly, and I have therefore adopted the correſponding term moſt familiar to an *Engliſh* ear. When theſe terms occur, it muſt not be forgotten, that they are by no means intended to convey the ſame ideas, which are uſually annexed to them in civilized ſocieties of mankind: and, for the reaſons juſt alleged, I may hope it will be deemed a very excuſable burleſque, to dignify a brutal barbarian with the title of *king*; or his place of habitation (which is little ſuperior to a dog-kennel) with the ſplendid name of a *palace*.

Atkins, who ſaw the *palace* of the king of *Whydah* before it was deſtroyed, deſcribes it as "a dirty, large, "bamboo building, of a mile or two in circumference; "where he kept a *thouſand* concubines, and divided his "time between eating and luſt." This deſcription, I venture to believe, is very ſuitable to all or moſt of the reſt.

The royal *ſimbomy*, or great houſe at *Calmina*, is ſurrounded by a mud wall, about twenty feet high; the ground it occupies is nearly a ſquare; each ſide of which is little ſhort of a mile in extent; for I found the two ſides which I meaſured, each ſixteen hundred of

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my paces in length. In the centre of each ſide was a large building, in which a guard of women and eunuchs under arms was poſted. On the roofs, which were of thatch, were ranged, on ſmall wooden ſtakes, a great many *human ſkulls* of priſoners taken in war. The inner apartments, which I had an opportunity of ſeeing, were only ſeveral large courts, communicating with each other; generally ſquare, or oblong, encompaſſed by mud walls. In each of them was a piazza, or ſhed, formed with poſts about ſeven feet high, and planted in the ground at the diſtance of about twelve or fourteen feet from the wall: the intermediate ſpace was covered with a ſlanting thatched roof, ſupported on bamboo rafters, reſting upon the poſts, and reaching to the top of the wall, which, in this part, was in general about twenty feet high, but only eight or ten feet on the other ſides of the court. The area of theſe courts was of the common ſoil of the country; but beneath the ſheds the ground was elevated a few inches by a bed of clayey mortar, which formed the floor; and the wall was in ſome parts white-waſhed with a ſpecies of pipe-clay which the country produces. The whole had ſomewhat the reſemblance of an aſſemblage of farm-yards, with long thatched barns, hovels for cattle and carts,

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and low mud walls to ſeparate them from each other. The interior of a Negriſh palace is not ſo eaſy to be deſcribed. Its receſſes are never entered by any human being of the male gender; and the female apartments are guarded from intruſion, with more than *eaſtern* jealouſy. I never paſſed the limits of the courts before mentioned, except once at *Abomey*, when the old king *Abadee* was ſick, and would ſee me in his bed-chamber, which was a detached circular room, of about eighteen feet diameter; it had a thatched, conical roof; the walls were of mud, and white-waſhed within; there was a ſmall area before it, formed by a wall about three feet high, the top of which was ſtuck full of *human jaw bones*, and the path leading to the door was paved with *human ſkulls*. The mattreſs and bedſtead were of *European* manufacture, with check curtains; the furniture of the room conſiſted of a ſmall table, a cheſt, and two or three chairs; and the clay floor was covered with a carpet, which I had ſold to him ſome few months before. The apartments for the women (each of whom have ſeparate huts) occupy, I believe, the remainder of the ſpace within the palace walls; except a ſmall part appropriated to the eunuchs, and to ſome neceſſary ſtore-houſes, for holding the proviſions

of

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of his numerous family, as well as for his *cowries*, iron bars, clothes, arms, ammunition, &c. and for ſome articles of *European* furniture. The late king was very deſirous of buying any article of this ſort that he could procure; ſuch as tables, chairs, bureaus, mahogany liquor-caſes, walking canes, caſes of knives and forks, and ſpoons, ſilver cups, and glaſs ware. I once brought him a two-handled ſilver cup and cover, of chaſed work, weighing *two hundred and twenty-ſix* ounces. I have ſometimes dined in the piazzas, or ſheds, before mentioned, and ſometimes in the open area of ſome of the courts: on the latter occaſions, the table, &c. were ſkreened from the ſun by large umbrellas held up by attendants, clothed in the country dreſs; which (for the men) in *Dahomy*, conſiſts of a pair of wide drawers, and a piece of cloth of about three yards long, and two broad, worn looſely round the body, in ſuch a manner as to leave the right arm free, and bare. I found no deficiency of table apparatus, and the king has always a ſucceſſion of cooks trained up in the *European* forts at *Whydah*, ſo that he is able to treat his viſitors with victuals dreſſed after their own country manner. My repaſts uſed to be ſerved up in plates, and diſhes of pewter and earthen ware. I ſhould remark,

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that although the *rive-twee* and *dog's fleſh* are highly reliſhed by the natives, the king's *European* gueſts are never diſguſted by the introduction of either.

I do not think the *Dahomans* are *Anthropophagiſts*, in the full ſenſe of that word; though they ſcruple not to eat a devoted victim at the public feſtivals; and yet reproach their own countrymen, the natives of *Foree*, with *Canabaliſm*, of which, I own, I am not inclined to believe them guilty. But, that other *African* nations are addicted to that unnatural practice, I have not the ſmalleſt doubt; becauſe, from the concurrent and credible teſtimony of thoſe who have been at *Bonny*, it is well known that a *Bonny* man kills and eats an *Audony* man; and an *Audony* man treats a *Bonny* man in the ſame way, whenever he has an opportunity: I mean, as a familiar repaſt, and not merely in ſavage triumph after a victory. *Snelgrave* is certainly correct, and *Atkins* ill-informed and erroneous, reſpecting the *Dahoman* king's motive for invading *Whydah*. I knew many of the old *Whydaſians* as well as *Dahomans* who were preſent when *Trudo* attacked that kingdom. They attributed his enterprize *ſolely* to the deſire of extending his dominions, and of enjoying at the *firſt hand*, thoſe commodities which he had been uſed to purchaſe of the

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the *Whydaſians*, who were in poſſeſſion of the coaſt. *Trudo* had ſolicited permiſſion from the king of *Whydah* to enjoy a free commercial paſſage through his country to the ſea ſide, on condition of paying the uſual *cuſtoms* upon *ſlaves exported*; this was peremptorily refuſed by the king of *Whydah*; and in conſequence of this refuſal, *Trudo* determined to obtain his purpoſe by force of arms: he ſucceeded in the attempt, and exterminated a great part of the inhabitants.

His conqueſt of the adjoining kingdom of *Ardra* facilitated the acquiſition of the other. *Ardra* was once a powerful and populous nation, whoſe ſovereignty extended from the river *Volta*, to the *Lagos*; but having afterwards been weakened by the revolts of *Quitta* (called by *Boſman*, *Coto*), and of *Popoe*, *Whydah*, *Appee*, *Bidagry*, and *Lagos*, it became incapable of oppoſing the victorious arms of *Trudo*. *Whydah*, whoſe king had imprudently declined to lend any aſſiſtance againſt the common enemy, ſoon fell a very eaſy conqueſt, and with it, the tributary port and province of *Jacquin*. This reſtleſs barbarian, after glutting his vengeance with carnage, and the deſolation of every maritime ſtate which he was able to reduce, turned his ſword againſt thoſe inland kingdoms which had hitherto withſtood his attacks.

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attacks. But meeting unexpectedly with a ſevere repulſe, his ferocity was redoubled by the diſgrace, and he ſought to gratify it, by committing freſh outrages, in the countries he had conquered. The arts of peace, the encouragement of agriculture, the introduction of practicable manufactures, and the promoting a civilized commerce with *European* traders, by an interchange of the native products of the moſt fertile ſpot in *Guiney*, were improvements, of which he does not appear to have ever formed the ſmalleſt idea; and of which his mind was probably not ſuſceptible. His pretended letter to his "*Brother*" *George II.* the monarch of *Great Britain*, is now known to have been an impudent forgery of one *Bullfinch Lambe*, who made his way with it to the Duke of *Chandos*, at that time the great patron of the Britiſh trade to *Africa*.

The policy of *Trudo* was that of an ambitious and brutal ſavage, who ſought to retain the territories he had acquired, by the expedient of firing the towns, and ſlaughtering the inhabitants; and in theſe exploits he employed ſome of the laſt years of his life, which ended in 1732. The ſovereignty devolved to *Boſſa Ahadee*, whoſe Memoirs I relate, and now with the utmoſt humility ſubmit to the candor of the public."

R. N.

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INTRODUCTION.

THE *Dahomans*, a powerful and warlike nation of *Africa*, who live to the eaſtward of the *Gold Coaſt*, between the rivers *Volta* and *Benin*, have not eſcaped the notice of modern geographers; whoſe attention they engaged, by extending their dominions to the ſea coaſt, and annexing to them, by conqueſt, the kingdom of *Whydah*; a country ſo reſpectable for its trade, that the Engliſh, French and Portugueſe maintain forts there for the protection of their reſpective ſhares of it.

The *Dahomans*, but little more than a century ago, were an inconſiderable nation; formidable however to their neighbours, for their valour and military ſkill: they were then known by the

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the name of *Foys*; and the town of *Dawhee*, which lies between *Calmina* and *Abomey*, was the capital of their ſmall territory.

Early in the laſt century, *Tacoodonou*, chief of the *Foy* nation, baſely murdered, in violation of the ſacred laws of hoſpitality, a ſovereign prince his neighbour, who made him a friendly viſit to honor one of his feſtivals: he then attacked and took *Calmina*, the capital of the deceaſed: ſtrengthened by this acquiſition, he ventured to wage war with *Da*, king of *Abomey*, whom he beſieged in his capital, which he ſoon reduced; and in conſequence of a vow, that he made during the ſiege, put *Da* to death, by cutting open his belly; and placed his body under the foundation of a palace that he built in *Abomey*, as a memorial of his victory; which he called *Dahomy*, from *Da* the unfortunate victim, and *Homy* his belly: that is, a houſe built in *Da*'s belly.

Tacoodonou

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Tacoodonou after this conqueſt fixed his reſidence at *Abomey*, and aſſumed the title of *King of Dahomy*; of which the cruel circumſtance juſt mentioned gives the true etymology; and from thence alſo the *Foys*, his ſubjects, are generally called *Dahomans*: in the country indeed the old name of *Foys* prevails; but to Europeans, I believe, they are only known by the name of *Dahomans*.

Thus *Tacoodonou* eſtabliſhed the *Dahoman* empire, which about a century afterwards his illuſtrious deſcendant *Guadja Trudo* aggrandized, by ſubduing various kingdoms, and adding *Whydah* to his dominions, in the year 1727; the conqueſt of which is particularly related by *Snelgrave*, *Atkins* and others.

Having premiſed this to the following account, which I have attempted to draw up, of the reign of *Boſſa Ahadee*, late king

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king of *Dahomy*, I ſhall conclude with a liſt of the kings of that country:

Tacoodonou conquered *Abomey*, and founded the *Dahoman* empire, about the year 1625.

Adaunzou I. began his reign in 1650.

Vibagee, in 1680.

Guadja Trudo (who conquered *Ardra*, *Whydah*, and *Jacquin*), in 1708.

Boſſa Ahadee, in 1732.

Adaunzou II. the preſent king, in 1774.

MEMOIRS

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ERRATA TO MEMOIRS OF *BOSSA AHÁDEE*, &c.

Page 24, line 19, for *failed* read *foiled.*
99, 23, for *having* read *brewing* and *felling* (or *making*).
116, last line, for *wine* read *hartſhorn.*
117, 3, for *The* read *This.*
151, 20, dele *and, for.*
do. 21, after *greater part* add *of which* continues, &c.
163, 9, after *one hundred* add *and forty.*
168, 12, for *propoſed* read *impoſed.*
176, 25, after *market* add *to exchange for, or to purchaſe.*

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MEMOIRS

OF THE REIGN OF

BOSSA AHADEE,

KING OF DAHOMY.

Written in the Year 1773.

CHAP. I.

BOSSA AHADEE ſucceeded his father *Guadja Trudo* in his hereditary kingdom of *Dahomy*, and alſo in the poſſeſſion of thoſe numerous and extenſive acquiſitions obtained by the victorious forces of that ſucceſsful tyrant;—the valuable kingdoms of *Ardrah* and *Whydah*, together with *Toree*, *Didouma*, *Ajirrah* and *Jacquin*, towards the ſea; beſides ſeveral ſtates inland bordering upon

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Dahomy; as *Povey*, which he aſſigned for the patrimony of the heir-apparent, and others, whoſe names I am not acquainted with. All theſe, *Trudo* conquered, and lived to ſee effectually enſlaved to his domination.

By *Trudo*'s management (in tolerating his new ſubjects with the free exerciſe of their various ſuperſtitions; and incorporating them with the *Dahomans* by intermarriage if it may be ſo called), no diſtinctions being made between the conquerors and conquered, who were now become one people, many of thoſe who had fled their native countries, to avoid the calamities of war, were induced to return and ſubmit quietly to his government; by which means, every part of his dominions became repleniſhed with people, and ſo devoted was their ſubmiſſion, that none of the conquered ſtates have to this day made any efforts to regain their independence.

Such was the ſituation of affairs, when *Trudo*, full of years, paid the debt of nature. His memory is ſtill dear to the *Dahomans*, and in matters of great importance it is cuſtomary with them to ſwear by his name, as the moſt

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moſt ſacred of all imprecations. His numerous conqueſts teſtify him to have been a great warrior; and that he was courteous, as well as intrepid, appears from his reply to the governors of the French, Engliſh, and Portugueſe forts in *Whydah*, who applied to him, on his conqueſt of that country, for an abatement of the duties which had been exacted by the former ſovereigns from the European ſhipping trading there. "As a mark "of my eſteem, ſaid he, I will uſe you as an "old man does his young bride, to whom he "can refuſe nothing; it ſhall be as you re-"quire, I remit you one half of the duties "for ever."

As it is criminal in the natives of this country to diſcourſe on politics, or to make any remarks upon the adminiſtration of public affairs, it is difficult to acquire any extenſive knowledge of facts; and the little information which can be obtained, is but imperfect: the remembrance of the moſt intereſting occurrences generally dies with thoſe concerned in them. Fathers have not here an opportunity of relating to their children a detail of what they have ſeen or done:

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the children belong to the ſtate, or rather are the property of the king, to whom they are ſent at too tender an age to recollect any thing of their parents. The old ſoldier dares not ſhew his fears and fight his battles over a bottle here; however, during a long reſidence, I have picked up the following memoirs among them: which I have arranged in order of time, as well as my information enabled me.

Trudo's death was concealed, as is cuſtomary upon ſuch occaſions, until the prime miniſters, who are ſtiled *Tamegan* and *Maybou*, had conſulted togther, and agreed which of his ſons was to ſucceed; a truſt which devolves to theſe officers, upon the deceaſe of their ſovereign: for though the ſon, who is the firſt born, after his father comes into poſſeſſion of the regal dignity, is eſteemed heir apparent to his dominions, yet if he appears to theſe two miniſters, from ſome defect or vice, of body or mind, to be unworthy of this exalted ſtation, they have the power of rejecting him, and of chuſing from among the other children, him who ſeems to be moſt deſerving

or

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or beſt qualified to rule over them.* Upon the preſent occaſion, they rejected the eldeſt ſon, and were unanimous in fixing their choice on *Ahadee*; whoſe reign has been a continued ſeries of miſery to his unhappy country, and who, notwithſtanding ſome good qualities, has proved upon the whole, a bad king, and a worſe man.

Tamegan and *Mayhou* having determined on their choice, announced *Trudo's* death and proclaimed *Ahadee* king: by which determination, his elder brother *Zingah*, finding his hopes diſappointed, and himſelf aggrieved by the loſs of an inheritance, with the expectation of which he had flattered himſelf; ſounded privately the diſpoſition of his friends. On applying ſecretly to thoſe upon whom he had conferred favors in his father's life time, he received aſſurance, of numbers

 being

* This we find was alſo the cuſtom in the kingdom of *Whydah*; where a general plunder prevailed, until the choice of the new king was publickly announced; there is ſomething remarkable in this temporary anarchy, (and return as it were into the ſtate of nature) as if it were originally meant, to make the people eager for the revival of ſovereign power, and a ſettled government.

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being willing to eſpouſe his cauſe; and he began to concert meaſures to ſurprize his brother, and ſeize the government either by ſtratagem or force. *Ahadee* however, got intelligence of his deſign; *Zingah*, and the principal conſpirators were ſeized, juſt on the point of taking up arms to aſſert his claim: *Zingah* was ſewed up in a hammock at *Abomey*, in which he was carried to *Whydah*, where he was put into a canoe, and taken about two leagues out at ſea, and there thrown over-board and drowned. The law of the country does not allow the ſacred blood of the royal family to be ſhed, but appoints this puniſhment for their offences: ſuch was the end of *Zingah*, and *all his adherents were put to death.*

The king, now clear of his competitor, and ſecure in the peaceable poſſeſſion of his dominions, threw off the maſk, and gave an unbounded indulgence to his inclinations; which unhappily were of the worſt kind. One of the firſt edicts of his reign was, that every man of the name of *Boſſa*, ſhould be put to death; which cruel order was punctually executed throughout his dominions;

old

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old and young, indiſcriminately ſuffered, and many innocent and uſeful men, were loſt to the community, for the gratification of his vanity; who thought it an inſult to majeſty, that a ſubject ſhould bear the ſame name as the ſovereign.

Though fame has tranſmitted this enormity to poſterity, ſhe has been kind to his memory in burying in oblivion the repeated acts of cruelty and oppreſſion which at laſt rouſed *Mayhou*, and induced him in 1735, to take up arms, to free his country from the tyranny, under which it groaned.

From the ſpecimen above mentioned, we may judge, what the king was capable of doing; and great indeed muſt the provocations have been, that induced *Mayhou* to take this ſtep; for it is the diſpoſition of the *Dahomans* to think favorably of their king, and approve his actions; they reverence him with a mixture of love and fear, little ſhort of adoration. "I think of my king," replied a *Dahomy* man to me; when I aſked him, juſt before his going to battle, if he was not apprehenſive of finding the enemy too ſtrong. "I think of my king," ſaid

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Dakou,* " and then I dare engage five of " the enemy myſelf." I am anxious for your ſafety, ſaid I, and ſhall be happy that you eſcape the dangers of the day. " It is not " material;" " he replied, my head belongs " to the king, not to myſelf; if he pleaſes to " ſend for it, I am ready to reſign it; or if " it is ſhot through in battle, it makes no " difference to me; I am ſatisfied, ſo that it " is the ſervice of my king." Every *Dahoman* poſſeſſes the ſame ſentiments; even at this day, after a tyranny of forty years, their loyalty and attachment remain unſhaken. Though his people are daily falling victims to his avarice, or anger, and there is not an individual in his dominions, but has loſt ſome near and dear connection by his orders, yet their misfortunes are attributed entirely to their own indiſcretions; and whatever the king does, they are perſuaded is right: ſuch blind ſubmiſſion and obedience, is probably no where elſe to be found.

Mayhou, who had been brought up and

* A faithful ſervant whom I employed in my factory, he afterwards fell undeſervedly under the king's diſpleaſure, and was ſold, by his order, for a ſlave.

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fought under *Trudo*, and had ſeen better days; finding all his perſuaſions ineffectual to reclaim the young king, who was deaf to his advice; could no longer remain a mere ſpectator of the diſtreſſes of his country: he had erred in his choice when he preferred *Ahadee* to his brother; and judging it a duty which he owed to his country, to free it from the tyrant whom he had concurred in placing upon the throne, he withdrew from court, and ſoon appeared in rebellion at the head of a powerful army. Thus, in addition to the evils with which *Ahadee* afflicted his country, he plunged it into the horrors of a civil war; the iſſue of which, had the event been equal to the juſtice of it, might have been fatal to him: but it terminated otherwiſe by the exertions of *Agaow**, who commanded the royal army; in which were many of the brave veterans who had ſo often conquered under *Trudo*. He entirely defeated the rebel army; *Mayhou* and many of his friends fell in the engagement: the priſoners taken on this occaſion were *put to death*;

* *Agaow*, is the title of the commander in chief of the king's army, and not the name of a particular man.

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and the few who eſcaped, having nothing to hope from the king's clemency, and to avoid the tortures intended for them, fled into the neighbouring ſtates, and ended their days in exile. The king ſeems to have harboured no vindictive reſentment againſt *Mayhou*'s family, for he ſoon after advanced his younger brother into his office, and he continues to be *Mayhou* to this time; a circumſtance rather extraordinary in *Ahadee*'s conduct, who has given very few inſtances of his clemency. In offences leſs heinous than that of *Mayhou*, when a man commits, or (what in the *Dahoman* maxims amounts to the ſame) is accuſed, of a crime, for which he is condemned to *death*, or to *ſlavery*; his effects are forfeited to the king; his domeſtics, relations, and friends, are all ſeized; ſome of them perhaps ſuffer death; the remainder are always ſold for ſlaves: when the delinquent happens to be a man of conſequence, with numerous dependants and connections, who are made to ſuffer death, or ſlavery on *his* account, it is no inconſiderable loſs to the ſtate; yet this is a calamity, which often happens; and together with the carnage of war, has contributed

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contributed greatly to depopulate this unhappy country.

CHAP. II.

THE internal tranquility of the kingdom was reſtored by *Mayhou*'s defeat, and death; but the *Foys*, did not long enjoy the ſweets of peace: deſtruction threatened them from another quarter. To the north-eaſt of *Dahomy* lies a fine, fertile, and extenſive country, inhabited by a great, and warlike people, called the *Eyoes*; the ſcourge and terror of all their neighbours. Theſe *Eyoes*, are governed by a king; but not by one ſo abſolute as the tyrant of *Dahomy*. If what report ſays of him be true, when his ill conduct gives juſt offence to his people, a deputation from them wait upon him, it is ſaid, and repreſent to him, that the burden of government has been ſo fatiguing, that it is full time for him to repoſe from his cares, and to indulge himſelf with a little ſleep.

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He thanks his people for their attention to his eaſe, retires to his apartment as if to ſleep, where he gives directions to his women to ſtrangle him; which is immediately executed, and his ſon quietly ſucceeds him, upon the ſame terms of holding the government no longer than his conduct merits the approbation of his people.

The *Dahomans*, to give an idea of the ſtrength of an *Eyoe* army, aſſert, that when they go to war, the general ſpreads the hide of a buffaloe before the door of his tent, and pitches a ſpear in the ground, on each ſide of it; between which the ſoldiers march, until the multitude, which paſs over the hide, have worn an hole through it; as ſoon as this happens, he preſumes that his forces are numerous enough to take the field. The *Dahomans* may poſſibly exaggerate, but the *Eyoes* are certainly a very populous, warlike and powerful nation.

They invaded *Dahomy* in 1738 with an irreſiſtible army, and laid the country waſte with fire and ſword to the gates of *Abomey*; here, the *Foys* had collected their whole ſtrength, and waited the arrival of the enemy,

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my, who were advancing with an incredible multitude.

The *Foys*, though inferior in numbers, were not intimidated; they had ſeen ſervice under *Trudo*, but never was their valour called forth upon a more trying occaſion; their country and every thing that was dear to them, lay at ſtake; and they did all that could be expected in its defence. The enemy attacked them in the morning; they acted wonders on that day; twice they repulſed the *Eyoes*, and had nearly given them a total defeat; but freſh ſupplies of the enemy continually pouring in, to replace thoſe who fell, the *Foys*, worn out with fatigue, were obliged to yield at laſt to ſuperior numbers, and retreated, under cover of the night, into *Abomey:* having killed of the *Eyoes*, above twice the number of their own army. Their ſituation now became truly calamitous, and no proſpect was before them, but an utter extinction of the *Dahomy* name and nation.

Abomey is a very large town, ſurrounded with a deep moat, but has no wall nor breaſt-work to defend the beſieged; nor are there

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there any ſprings of water in it; conſequently, it could not be long tenable. The firſt care of the *Dahomans* on the night after the battle, whilſt the *Eyoes* were too much fatigued to interrupt them, was, to ſend away the wounded, and the women and children, to *Zaſſa*, a town about twenty-five miles off, where the king then was; who when he learned the unfortunate iſſue of the day, was immediately conveyed, with his women and treaſures, to an inacceſſible retreat, about four hours journey from *Zaſſa*. The path leading to it is extremely intricate, and known to very few of the *Dahomans* themſelves; and is never viſited, except in caſes of the laſt extremity, when the king is obliged to fly for the ſafety of his perſon. As none but the king's own family take ſhelter there, it was eſteemed an extraordinary mark of reſpect ſhewn to *Mr. Gregory*, governor of the *Engliſh* fort at *Whydah*, who happened to be at *Zaſſa* at this unhappy time, that the king was pleaſed to take him in his royal ſuite to this place. *Agaow*, the king's general at *Abomey*, continued to defend the place, and amuſe the enemy,

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enemy, until he learned that the king was ſafe, and *Zaſſa* evacuated: he then took the advantage of a dark night, conducted the remains of his army ſafe, paſſed the enemy, and fled; leaving the town to the mercy of the *Eyoes*, who afterwards plundered and burnt it; as they alſo did *Calmina* and *Zaſſa*: they lived in the country at diſcretion, as long as they could procure ſubſiſtence; and in a few months, when that grew ſcarce, returned to their own country. Had they, when they engaged at *Abomey*, detached a part of their numerous army, and attacked *Zaſſa* at the ſame time, the king and all his treaſure muſt inevitably have fallen into their hands: and for this neglect, their general was diſgraced upon his return.

The *Eyoes* continued for ſeveral years, to harraſs *Dahomy* with an annual viſit: the *Foys* never thought it prudent to engage them afterwards; but when apprized of their coming, uſed to evacuate their towns, divide into ſmall parties, and ſhelter themſelves as well as they could in their faſtneſſes and woods. The king uſed all his efforts to obtain an accommodation, and offered them

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them any reaſonable compenſation to refrain from hoſtilities; but it was difficult to ſatisfy their demands. They claimed, in conſequence of an old treaty, an annual tribute; the payment of which had been omitted in the proſperous days of *Trudo*. Theſe arrears were conſiderable; and freſh demands were alſo added, on account of the conqueſt of *Whydah*, which the *Eyoes* looked upon as an inexhauſtible ſource of wealth to the king. Their expectations, upon the whole, were ſo exorbitant, that *Abadee* found it impracticable to ſatisfy them; and the *Eyoes* continued to ravage the country for ſeveral years, burning their towns, deſtroying their crops in harveſt, killing many people, and carrying numbers away into captivity. In the year 1747, however, the *Eyoes* conſented to an accommodation, and compromized the matter for a tribute, which is paid them annually at *Calmina*, in the month of *November*.

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CHAP. III.

THE *Dahomans*, whilſt they were thus diſtreſſed by the *Eyoes*, were engaged in two other bloody wars (each of which continued above thirty years) with the *Mahees*, and with the old *Whydahs*; who had fled out of the country at the conqueſt, and were now aſſiſted by their neighbours the *Popoes*.

The *Mahee* country, which is an extenſive one, lies to the weſtward of *Dahomy*, on its borders; it is divided into ſeveral ſmall ſtates, each governed by its own laws, and independent of one another: theſe ſtates form a *republic*, and unite for the common ſafety, when dangers threaten any of the confederated members. The war with them was entirely provoked by *Ahadee*. They were diſpoſed to live in friendſhip with him; but his reſtleſs ſpirit would not ſuffer them to remain in peace. He claimed a right of interference in their national concerns, and inſiſted

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ſiſted on altering their mode of government; and upon their refuſal to comply, declared war againſt them. He had heard in his youth, that the *Foys* were invincible, and their arms irreſiſtible: but if they were ſo in the days of *Trudo*, his misfortunes and diſgraces ſhould have taught *Abadee* to be leſs confident. He reſolved therefore to aboliſh the republic, and give the *Mahees* a king; but he wanted talents proportioned to this enterpriſe. *Trudo* had been monarch, ſtateſman, general, uniting all in his own perſon, and conſtantly fought at the head of his troops. *Abadee*, immured in his ſeraglio, where thouſands adminiſtered to his pleaſures, expected a prompt devotion to his will, and flattering himſelf with an eaſy conqueſt, thought nothing was more expedient for that purpoſe, than to ſignify to *Agaow*, "*That* "*his houſe wanted thatch*," which is the phraſe uſed in giving his general orders to go to war, and alludes to the cuſtom of placing the heads of the enemy, killed in battle, or any of the priſoners of diſtinction, on the roof of the guard houſes at the gates of his palaces.

Abadee pretended, that his ſubjects, travelling

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velling through the *Mahee* country to more diſtant nations, for the purpoſes of trade, were frequently oppreſſed by heavy taxes, arbitrarily impoſed there by the ſtates through which they had occaſion to paſs; that theſe ſtates were ſo numerous and avaricious, that it was impoſſible, in the preſent ſituation of affairs, to regulate their demands, for the future ſecurity of his ſubjects' property; but that if *one* king governed the whole *Mahee* nation, treaties could then be eſtabliſhed, to the mutual advantage of both kingdoms. This in fact was mere pretence; for no part of *Ahadee*'s conduct had teſtified that regard for the welfare and intereſt of his people, which his language on the preſent occaſion ſeemed to manifeſt. The true reaſon was, that one of his favorite wives, who was a *Mahee* woman, had a brother whom he wiſhed to advance to this dignity; but the *Mahees* refuſed to relinquiſh their independence, and ſubmit to be governed by a tyrant; and *Ahadee* perſiſted in his reſolution. A war commenced in 1737, and was carried on with all that ſavage fury which is cuſtomary among barbarous nations. The priſoners

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ſoners of diſtinction were put to death; and the other captives conſigned to ſlavery; theſe were the *beſt* terms either party allowed. Many battles were fought with various ſucceſs; ſometimes the *Mahees*, ſometimes the *Dahomans* were victorious; but neither would relinquiſh their pretenſions: to follow them through all their ſcenes of ſlaughter, would be a diſguſting taſk, and indeed almoſt impoſſible.

The ſevereſt blow which the *Mahees* received was in 1752, about fifteen years after the commencement of the war: they had been unſucceſsful in ſome battles, and were unable to keep the field. There is, in their country a very high mountain called *Boagry*, rendered almoſt inacceſſible by nature, and deemed impregnable: thither the *Mahees* fled, with the ſhattered remains of their army. The *Dahomans* pillaged, and laid waſte the country without oppoſition; and having impoſed what terms, and contributions they pleaſed on the vanquiſhed, *Agaow* ſat down with his army and inveſted *Boagry*; which as a camp, had one fault; it was as difficult to quit, when occaſion required, as it was arduous

arduous of acceſs. Many ſkirmiſhes happened betwixt the beſiegers and beſieged, theſe making frequent ſallies, and the others many attempts to force their way up the mountain. The *Mabees*, planted corn, and had plenty of water upon *Boagry*, which enabled them to perſevere in a long reſiſtance.

Agaow, had now inveſted them near twelve months, without being able to advance far up the mountain; when the king, ſolicitous for the honor of his arms, ſent his general all the aſſiſtance that he was able to draw together, and ordered him to hazard every thing for the reduction of *Boagry*, whatever the loſs of men might be on the occaſion. *Agaow*, was by this time, well acquainted with the mountain, and led on his men to this dangerous enterprize, determined either to conquer, or die in the attempt: he attacked it, in every acceſſible part: the *Mabees*, made an obſtinate reſiſtance, and killed an immenſe number of their enemy; but at laſt, the bravery of the *Dahomans*, and their ſuperior numbers, ſurmounted every difficulty; they routed the *Mabees* from their

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entrenchments, and ſummit. A prodigious ſlaughter enſued, for there was no poſſibility of eſcaping: the unfortunate remnant which the ſword had ſpared, were led in triumph, captive to *Abomey*, where the chiefs were put to death, and the remainder ſold for ſlaves.

The king was at this time warmly engaged with the old *Whydahs*, and *Popoes*; and had occaſion for all his troops to reinforce his army in that quarter, which induced him to deſiſt from further hoſtilities againſt the *Mahees* at preſent, and even to conſent to a truce with them; but as this was ill obſerved by either ſide, it proved of very ſhort continuance. The *Mahees*, though defeated, were far from being ſubjugated; thoſe who had fled, after the calamity which happened at *Boagry*, returned to their country, and were ſtill a formidable enemy: eſpecially as the *Dahomans*, were now weakened by a ſeries of near twenty years unprofitable wars.

Hoſtilities were renewed, and carried on as before, to the ruin of both countries; without producing any thing deciſive. *Aba-*

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he could not effect his purpoſe of impoſing a king on the *Mahees*; nor were they ſo far humbled as to ſubmit to accept of one. They reſolved to retaliate the inſult at *Boagry*, by invading *Dahomy*; and actually penetrated into that diſmal foreſt which divides *Dahomy* from *Ardra*, in order by that manœuvre to intercept any ſuccours coming from the kingdoms of *Ardra* or *Whydah* to the relief of *Dahomy*: but in conſequence of ſome diviſion in their councils (a grievance to which republics are generally expoſed), they retired again without atchieving any thing worthy of the boldneſs and wiſdom of the deſign.

In 1764, the advantage ſeemed to be on the ſide of the *Dahomans*, who then laid ſiege a ſecond time to *Boagry*: but had not a ſufficient force to render themſelves maſters of it. Several of *Abadee*'s ſons were with his army, to animate the ſoldiers by their preſence; and among them his favorite *Jupera*, his father having ſent him under *Agaow*'s care, to acquire military excellence. This general had been encamped above twelve months around *Boagry*; when the king, impatient

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patient at the delay, accuſed him of cowardice, and ſent *Maybou* to take the command, with orders to proceed immediately to the aſſault. When *Agaow* found himſelf ſuperſeded, and diſgraced, he judged it was time to conſult his perſonal ſafety, as he well knew the king's diſpleaſure to be implacable. Having *Jupera*, the heir-apparent in power, he could have taken a ſevere revenge of his ungrateful maſter; but he generouſly delivered him into *Maybou's* care, and withdrew privately to the *Mahees*; who received, and protected him.

Maybou, made an unſucceſsful attempt againſt *Boagry*; was repulſed, and obliged to raiſe the ſiege: he returned with his army to *Dahomy*; and to add to the unfortunate event, *Jupera* died on the march. *Ahadee* failed in his views, and in fact unable to proſecute them any further, never attempted any thing of conſequence afterwards againſt the *Mahees*; and the perſon, in whoſe favor he had made ſo many fruitleſs exertions, dying ſome years afterwards, both parties ſeemed heartily tired of the war, and agreed to a peace in 1772, which ſtill continues.

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CHAP. IV.

DURING the continuance of the *Mahee* war, the *Dahomans* had too much employment, in another quarter, to permit them ever to breathe from their toils. The old *Whydahs*, aſſiſted by the *Popoes*, allowed them no reſpite on that ſide. This war was ſtill more ruinous if poſſible, than that which was carried on with the *Mahees*: the *Dahomans*, were generally obliged to act upon the defenſive; and even when they routed the enemy, could reap but little advantage from the victory; for their country, environed by ſwamps, and creeks, is ſo defenſible by nature, that it was next to impoſſible to purſue them. It may be neceſſary to explain the motives of this war.

When *Trudo*, king of *Dahomy* had ſubdued *Ardra*, and *Toree*, he led his victorious army in 1727, againſt the *Whydahs*, who ſhamefully fled before him; and without making any

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any reſiſtance, or even trying the fortune of a battle, yielded their country an eaſy prey to the invader. Many were made priſoners, and ſold for ſlaves; ſome ſurrendered themſelves to the conqueror's mercy, and were admitted to be his vaſſals: but, the greater number eſcaped, and fled out of the country, taking refuge among their neighbours the *Popoes*, whoſe country borders on *Whydah*, to the weſtward, and ſettled there; in a low, marſhy country, ſurrounded with ſwamps, and interſected with many branches of rivers, which form a multitude of iſlands, on which they lived. Theſe refugees, aſſiſted by the *Popoes*, with whom they were incorporated and became as it were one nation, bore an inveterate hatred againſt the *Dahomans*; and, urged by a deſire of regaining their native country, omitted no occaſion to harraſs them. Their vicinity to *Whydah*; the facility with which they tranſported their troops in canoes, within two miles of *Grigwhee*, the capital of it; the embarraſſed ſituation of the king's affairs, whoſe country was ſometimes over run by the *Eyoes*, and whoſe whole force was at other times employed againſt

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againſt the *Mahees*, and this frontier left defenceleſs; afforded them many opportunities of committing invaſions with advantage. They frequently got poſſeſſion of *Whydah* beach, and interrupted the trade; in which event the ſhipping were often conſiderable ſufferers: the white people, their goods, or whatever property happened to be on the beach fell a prey to them: ſometimes they made incurſions up to the town of *Griwhee*, where the Engliſh, French, and Portugueſe, have each, a fort; and if attacked by a ſuperior force, they readily eſcaped to their canoes, and eluded their purſuers: for the *Dahomans* have no addreſs in engagements on the water, as they are altogether unacquainted with the management of canoes. An occaſion preſented in the year 1741, which had it been rightly managed, might have concluded theſe differences, to the ſatisfaction of the king, and to the advantage of his country: but, over-ruled by his evil genius, he neglected the opportunity; and exaſperated the *Whydahs* more than ever.

The *Whydahs*, in their exile, ſtill adhered to the ſyſtem of their old government; and continued

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continued to be ruled by a *king*: but it was neceſſary, on the acceſſion of a new one, that he ſhould be inaugurated at *Xavier*, which had been the ſeat of his anceſtors, and the capital of *Whydah*, before the conqueſt; for the celebration of which ceremony it was requiſite, that permiſſion ſhould firſt be obtained from *Abadee*, who derived an advantage from it, by exacting a conſideration for the liberty of going thither; and as a truce was neceſſary for a ceſſation of hoſtilities on theſe occaſions, he did not omit to turn it to account, whenever there was an opportunity, by employing his agents to ſow diviſions among them, in hope of reaping ſome advantage by that means.

To be king of the *Whydahs*, even in their humbled ſtate, had its temptations; and the brother of the rightful heir was, upon the death of his father, which happened about that time, ambitious of this rank. If *Abadee* did not ſuggeſt, he at leaſt encouraged this ſcheme, with a view to divide the *Whydahs*; and aſſured him of his ſupport; in return for which, the other engaged privately to become his tributary and ally, and

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to pay a conſiderable ſum upon his acceſſion to the government. This wicked young man (relying on *Ahadee*'s protection) whilſt the ceremonies were preparing at *Xavier*, to inveſt his brother with the regal dignity, had the audacity to murder him there, and the addreſs to be appointed king in his place; and cloſed his atchievement, by devouring the heart of his unfortunate brother; which laſt act of unnatural barbarity was the proof required by *Ahadee*, of unlimited devotion to his commands.

The enormity of this action, and the engagements which the uſurper had made with *Ahadee*, though intended to be kept ſecret, did not altogether eſcape the knowledge of the *Whydahs*; they ſuſpected what had paſſed, and ſeveral of them, inſtead of returning from *Xavier* to live under ſuch a king, remained in the country, and ſettled under the protection of the Portugueſe fort at *Griwhee*; of which *Seignior John Baſile* was at that time governor; a gentleman of humane temper and engaging diſpoſition. Theſe people maintained a correſpondence with their countrymen, and making a favor-

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able report of the governor's behavior, and of their own ſituation, many of the old *Whydahs* were induced to come and ſettle in the country, to avoid the horrors of a civil war in their own: five or ſix hundred perſons eſtabliſhed themſelves peaceably in this manner; and if this diſpoſition had been properly encouraged, in all probability a much greater number had followed their example; but *Ahadee*, without waiting for ſuch a deſirable event, by which he would have gained a large addition of uſeful and valuable ſubjects, cruelly determined to ſeize upon theſe poor people, and ſell them for ſlaves. To facilitate his deſign, the king invited *Seignior John Baſile* to *Abomey*, on pretence of buſineſs; but the true motive was, to have him in his power. The governor proceeded on his journey, and meeting *Agaow* at the head of an army upon the road, in full march towards *Whydah*; he was arreſted by the king's order, and informed that the only condition of regaining his liberty was to deliver up all the *Whydahs* who had put themſelves under his protection: the governor urged his faith and honor plighted to theſe people;

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people; and, treating the propoſal with contempt, was detained priſoner by the general; who continued his march to *Griwhee*, and encamped on *Gonnegee*, a plain between that town and the river, by which poſition he cut off the retreat of the *Whydahs* to their own country. *Agaow*, finding the governor was determined not to betray the *Whydahs*, offered to take a certain quantity of goods, as a ranſom for them: the propoſal was accepted, and the goods delivered; but pretences were ſtill found to detain the governor, and a freſh demand for more goods was made: theſe he alſo conſented to pay, and ſent an order to the fort for their delivery. A head ſervant of his, a black man, who had charge of the fort, ſaw that they were deceiving his maſter; and refuſed to ſend any more goods. He intimated his ſuſpicions to the *Whydahs*, who finding no poſſibility of eſcape, reſolved to defend themſelves to the laſt extremity: they retired into the fort, and got every thing in order for its protection; determined, if overpowered at laſt, to ſell their lives as dear as poſſible: *Agaow* remained quiet in his camp on *Gonnegee*, for about

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about a fortnight, perhaps waiting for orders; and then came to a reſolution to attack the fort. This was ſurrounded with a wall and a deep moat, and mounted about thirty guns. *Agaow*'s diſadvantage lay in having no artillery; however, early in the morning, on the 1ſt of November 1741, he led on his troops to the ſtorm, and began his attack on every ſide; thoſe within the fort were not idle; but with their cannon made a prodigious ſlaughter: the *Dahomans*, with that bravery which animates them on all occaſions, filled up their ranks with freſh men, as faſt as others fell, and continued the aſſault. About noon a quantity of gunpowder in one of the baſtions took fire, and communicated the flame to the roofs of the buildings, which were thatched, and blazed furiouſly: this accident threw the beſieged into great confuſion, which was conſiderably increaſed by an exploſion of the magazine, in whoſe deſtruction every ſoul near it was involved. The *Dahomans* now entered at the embraſures, almoſt without oppoſition, and put every man they met with to the ſword. The governor's faithful ſervant,

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who had commanded in the defence, ſeeing all was loſt, threw open the gate, and with a keg of gunpowder under his arm, and a lighted match in his hand, ran, impelled with rage and deſpair, towards the place where *Agaow* was: and having got as near to him as he could, with intention to make him a partner in his own unmerited fate, ſet fire to the powder, and heroically blew himſelf to pieces: his ſecond in command was taken alive, and roaſted afterwards before a ſlow fire at *Calmina*. *Ahadee* afterwards rebuilt the fort for the Portugueſe, and diſavowed *Agaow*'s proceedings; denying that he gave him any orders to act as he had done; but, although he was deſirous to throw the odium of this affair upon his general, no one pretended to acquit *Ahadee* himſelf from the infamy of the whole plan and tranſaction.

Agaow was about to return from this exploit, when he received orders from the king to go and chaſtiſe the people of *Jacquin*; a country which borders immediately on *Whydah*, to the eaſtward: it was once a place of ſome conſequence, and the Dutch had formerly a ſettlement there. It had been con-

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quered by *Trudo*, and annexed to his dominions: but the inhabitants, taking advantage of the perplexed ſtate of the king's affairs, had neglected for ſome time paſt to pay the tribute, which had been impoſed on them. This country, like that of the *Popoes*, ſurrounded with marſhes and ſwamps, was of difficult acceſs; and the *Dahomans* were not ſufficiently acquainted with the environs, to be able to make an inroad into it: but it happened at this time, that a woman of ſome conſequence, belonging to a *Jacquin* chief having been guilty of ſome gallantries, dreaded the puniſhment of her inconſtancy, fled to *Dahomy*; and for a promiſe of the royal protection, engaged to conduct his army through the only path by which *Jacquin* could be invaded with effect. *Agaow* having this woman for his guide, entered *Jacquin* unexpectedly, and *extirpated the whole nation, not leaving a ſingle inhabitant alive in the whole country* *; for the poor people, hemmed in by their impaſſable moraſſes, were

* *Adaunzou* II. ſent a few families to re-eſtabliſh a ſettlement there in the year 1777.

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caught; as it were, in a trap, and could not eſcape.

CHAP. V.

THE *Whydahs* were too much diſguſted with their new king, to ſuffer him to reign long over them; he had rendered himſelf ſo odious, that he could not even form a party among them to ſupport his pretenſions, and unable to make *Ahadee* the payment, which had been promiſed at his acceſſion, all ſuccours from that quarter were refuſed: he was therefore obliged to relinquiſh that government which he had atrociouſly obtained, and withdrew to *Dahomy*, where, after wandering about for ſome time univerſally deſpiſed, he died miſerably of a leprous diſeaſe, contracted immediately on his return from *Xavier*: and which the *Dahomans* attributed to the horrid repaſt he had made there, when he devoured the heart of his own brother.

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All that had paſſed ſerved only to exaſperate the exiled *Whydahs* ſtill more againſt *Ahadee*, and hoſtilities were renewed with greater fury than ever: in 1743 they enlarged their plan of operations, and ſeemed determined to diſpute the poſſeſſion of *Whydah* with him. The *Popoes*, and all their other friends, concurred in aſſiſting them, and they invaded *Whydah* with a powerful army. Their deſigns had been no ſecret, but it was out of the king's power to prevent them: *Dahomy* was at that time overrun by the *Eyaes* or *Iaas*, and every thing was in confuſion: *Agaow* and the army were at a conſiderable diſtance, engaged with the *Mahees*; and *Whydah* was left almoſt defenceleſs, and effectually deprived of any military aſſiſtance: however, *Caukaow** did every thing that could be expected from a brave and loyal ſoldier: he put his ſmall army in readineſs; *Eubiga*, the vice-roy, aſſembled all that were able to bear arms in the town, and joined him; the *Xavier* Cabocheers, and all

* The title of the military officer who commands in *Whydah*.

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their vaſſals increaſed his force; but ſtill *Caukaow* was inferior to the enemy: however he was not intimidated, he knew his own heart, and relied on the bravery of his followers. Fear never enters into the mind of a *Dahoman*; cowardice is no part of his compoſition: he marched out againſt the enemy, and met them about a mile to the weſtward of the *French* fort. The generals of both parties held a diſpaſſionate converſation at the head of their troops; in which they declared to each other their reſpective determinations, the one to conquer, the other to defend the country: they drank together, and *Caukaow* toaſted health to his king, and ſucceſs to his arms; wiſhing that if he was unſucceſsful on that day, he might not ſurvive the diſgrace, but periſh like the glaſs, out of which he had drank, daſhing it as he ſpoke againſt the ground, and breaking it in pieces. The battle commenced, and was obſtinately fought: all that rude ſkill, and ferocious courage could effect, was executed on each ſide; at laſt *Caukaow* fell at the head of his men, after inflicting and receiving innumerable wounds, and diſtinguiſhed both

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as a general, and a ſoldier. The firſt in rank, were foremoſt in danger. *Eubiga*, and nearly all the chieftains of his party were among the ſlain; and the *Xavier* Cabocheers ſhared the ſame fate. The *Dahomans*, deſtitute of leaders, and overpowered by numbers, were thrown into confuſion, and totally routed.

The enemy next day pillaged *Griwhee*, without oppoſition, and burned it; the inhabitants fled out of the country, and left the *Whydahs* in peaceable poſſeſſion. They ſummoned the forts to ſubmit, or at leaſt to acknowledge the new government: but the governors continued attached to the king, and refuſed to accede to the propoſals offered by his enemies. The old *Whydahs* flocked into the country in great numbers, with their families; and built a town upon *Gonnegee*, a plain between *Griwhee* and the river, juſt beyond all annoyance from the guns of the forts. Three tedious months elapſed after the battle, which had been ſo fatal to the king's affairs, without his receiving any advices from the governors of the forts; who began to be ſo much in want of proviſions, that it is probable they could not

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not have continued much longer, to decline an accommodation with the *Whydahs*; when a meſſenger arrived privately from the king, with aſſurances that they might depend upon being ſpeedily relieved; and entreating them to perſevere in his cauſe for a few days longer. The meſſenger, having given this information, eluded the vigilance of the *Whydahs*, and returned with the ſame ſecrecy. *Ahadee*, finding that the forts continued true to his intereſt, did not deſpair of recovering the country: he had not been idle before in making every proviſion that was in his power. He recalled *Agaow* out of *Mahee*, and, as ſoon as the *Eyoes* permitted him, by returning to their own country, he muſtered all his *Dahomans*, and increaſed his general's army to fifty-thouſand men. This formidable army arrived in *Whydah* in ten days after the meſſenger had been there. As the *Whydahs* did not expect them, they were not prepared for an encounter: they were attacked, defeated, and driven out of the country; by which means the poſſeſſion of it was once more ſecured to the king.

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Let us ceaſe for the preſent attending them through their ſubſequent hoſtilities, and proceed to relate an affair of ſome moment which followed next in order of time in this country.

CHAP. VI.

THE kingdom of *Whydah* having been recovered by this fortunate event, *Abadee* appointed a perſon named *Tanga*, to be *Eubiga* (or vice-roy) over it, in the place of his predeceſſor who had periſhed with *Caukaow*, in the late bloody conflict with the *Whydahs*: he was a man of violent paſſions; vain, proud, and ambitious; he maintained a great number of domeſtics and attendants, whom he attached to his perſon by his liberality; and to his intereſt by protecting them in their villainies, and ſcreening them from juſtice in defiance of the king. His oppreſſions rendered him odious to the garriſons at the forts; and his great influence and

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and wealth gave no ſmall uneaſineſs to the king; who nevertheleſs did not care to attack him openly, but waited a fit opportunity to get him into his hands by ſtratagem, or ſurprize. While *Ahadee* was waiting to accompliſh this purpoſe, *Tanga* was meditating nothing leſs, than the acquiſition of *Whydah* kingdom for himſelf. A daring project, and not juſtified by even a plauſible motive; for, being a eunuch from his infancy, he had no children to be elevated to royal dignity. The poſt which he already poſſeſſed was a very honorable one, and his opulence ſo conſiderable, that it amply afforded him the gratification of every deſire, except that of inſatiable ambition. His plan was, to gain poſſeſſion of the *Engliſh* fort, and then to declare himſelf king. The command of any of the forts would have been a conſiderable aſſiſtance to his deſign; but he preferred this, from an opinion which prevails in the country that it is impregnable. The ſpot on which *William's Fort** ſtands, was formerly dedicated to religious

* The *Engliſh* caſtle in *Whydah* is ſo called.

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ligious purpoſes, and to the exerciſe of ſacred ceremonies: the deities which were formerly worſhipped there, are ſuppoſed ſtill to protect it; and, in compliance with the ſuperſtition of the natives, the governors permit a houſe within the walls of the fort to be appropriated to *Nabbakou*, the titular god of the place. It has hitherto been ſo fortunate, as to eſcape thoſe calamities which the other forts have experienced; a circumſtance, rather extraordinary, as the *Whydah* king, when he fled from *Xavier*, at the time of the *Dahomans* invaſion of his kingdom, took ſhelter there; and found protection in it, until there was an opportunity of conveying him in ſafety out of the country. This might poſſibly have brought upon it, the vengeance of the *Dahomans*; however, they did not appear to reſent it; though they plundered the *French* fort at that time, and afterwards that which belonged to the *Portugueſe*, as we have already related; but the *Engliſh* fort, having met with no ſimilar diſaſter, ſtood high in the opinion of the natives: and *Tanga* deemed the acquiſition of

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of it of greater importance to his deſigns, than all the others.

When *Tanga*'s ſcheme was ripe for execution, he attempted to ſurprize *William's Fort*, in *Auguſt*, 1745, in the following manner. Under pretence of making a public viſit to the forts, he gave directions that a certain number of his men ſhould be ready to attend him. When the vice-roy viſits the governors, it is cuſtomary for him to be accompanied by four or five hundred men, under arms; beſides the muſicians, flag-bearers, umbrella-carriers, and ſeveral employed immediately about his perſon; amounting perhaps to one hundred more. Upon the preſent occaſion, *Tanga*, ſelected all theſe out of his beſt men, whom he could rely on, and knew to be devoted to his will; and hoped, that by introducing them, without ſuſpicion, into the fort as uſual, he ſhould eaſily make himſelf maſter of it. Before he departed from his own houſe, he ſupplied his men with ammunition, and ordered them to load their muſkets; an order which appeared ſtrange to thoſe who were not appriſed of his ſecret intentions. The Engliſh

linguiſt,

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linguiſt, who was accidentally preſent, ſtruck with this circumſtance, ſlipped away privately, and acquainted Mr. *Gregory*, the Engliſh governor, with what he had ſeen. Mr. *Gregory*'s ſuſpicions were raiſed by the information, and he made a proper uſe of it, by providing for the ſecurity of his fort, whilſt *Tanga* was paying a viſit to the French governor. He ordered his guns to be loaded, and the gate ſhut, before the vice-roy arrived; and when he came, refuſed to admit him into the fort, unleſs he diſmiſſed his retinue; *Tanga* refuſed to comply, and proteſted againſt ſuch an exception, as an unprecedented indignity, to which it became him not to ſubmit: he threatened, and ſoothed alternately, but to no purpoſe; the governor would not recede from his determination; and *Tanga*, finding it impracticable to introduce his ruffians, returned home extremely chagrined at the diſappointment.

Apprehending from the governor's unuſual precaution, that his deſigns were diſcovered; he began to fortify his houſe. *Ahadee* on receiving intelligence of what had paſſed, declared

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clared him a traitor, and ſet a price upon his head: ſome troops were ſent to attack him, which he engaged, and defeated; but more ſuccours arriving, they beſieged him in his houſe, from whence he made frequent ſallies, and ſometimes with ſucceſs; but his ſtrength diminiſhed daily by the loſs of men in theſe ſkirmiſhes, and he ſaw no proſpect of extricating himſelf. In this dilemma he conſulted his prieſts; who, having performed their ſuperſtitious rites, informed him, That his ſafety alone depended upon getting into the *Engliſh* fort; this was no eaſy matter to effect; he was cloſely beſieged by the king's troops, and upon bad terms with the *Engliſh* governor; who, beſides abhorring his rebellion, had not forgiven an inſult, which he received from him ſome months before; when in company with the other governors, he was going to *Abomey*, to complain to the king of his viceroy's oppreſſive conduct; *Tauga*, apprized of their intentions, met them on the road at *Ardra*, where he ſeized them; and having kept them for ſome days priſoners in the ſtable, among his horſes, brought them back with him to *Whydah*, ſufficiently humbled, and debarred

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debarred from all acceſs to the king. Under theſe circumſtances the only refuge pointed out to him by the prieſts (and which they had probably adviſed for this reaſon) ſeemed almoſt unattainable: but his affairs were deſperate, and ſomething muſt be attempted; he harangued his adherents, intreated their aſſiſtance, and diſtributed all his treaſures among them: his ſilks, his coral, his gold, were laviſhed without reſerve, to animate them on this emergency: his *wives* (for though an eunuch he had a ſeraglio of ſome hundreds) joined their perſuaſions, and his people at length worked up to an attachment and reſolution worthy of a better occaſion, refuſed to ſacrifice him to their own ſafety; which they might have obtained by delivering him up: they determined to force their way through the king's troops, conduct their maſter to the Engliſh fort, and there recommend him to the governor's mercy. This reſolution being adopted, the women, dreading a reverſe of fortune, and deſpairing to meet again with ſo indulgent a lord, put each other to death: the oldeſt firſt ſlaughtering the young ones, and then cutting their own throats.

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throats. This melancholy office being performed, and the houſe ſet on fire to deſtroy the remaining effects, and prevent their falling into the king's hands; *Tanga* and his party, with ſuch part of his treaſure as was moſt portable, ſallied forth, and made good their paſſage through the king's troops, directing their courſe for the Engliſh caſtle; from whence they were fired upon, as they approached, and *Tanga* retreating into the garden, received a ſhot which ended at once his life and ambition. Originally, and in his youth, a captive, and a ſlave, he had the addreſs to recommend himſelf to *Ahadee*'s friendſhip, who raiſed him to the higheſt rank: but his inſolence, which was inſupportable; and his ingratitude to his benefactor, proved how unworthy he was of the favors he had received. When he fell, his adherents immediately diſperſed; ſome eſcaped out of the country, but the greater part of them were taken, and ſuffered, as they deſerved.

The affection of *Tanga*'s wives, which impelled them in the deſperate criſis of his affairs to devote themſelves to death, may perhaps

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haps appear romantic, if not incredible. To explain this, it is neceſſary to obſerve, that *Tanga* did not guard his women with that jealous eye and ſtrict confinement which is uſual in that part of the world.—The ſeraglio was only a neceſſary appendage to the pomp and ſplendor of his rank; and out of this reſervoir he generouſly ſupplied all his ſervants with wives. Such unprecedented bounty conciliated the ſincereſt regard of theſe people. Every young man within his juriſdiction was ambitious of ſerving *Tanga:* to his ſeraglio he appeared, not the rigid jailer, nor the tyrannic uſurper of the affections;—but the generous arbiter of its livelieſt pleaſures. His women could not but be charmed with a freedom, which no other ſeraglio enjoyed; and would not ſurvive that felicity and protection which was to terminate with the exiſtence of their maſter, and of their lovers, whoſe ruin ſeemed inevitable.

CHAP.

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CHAP. VII.

TANGA and his followers were not unworthy of the fate they met with; and if *Abadee* had reſtricted his vengeance to thoſe who really deſerved it, his character would have been leſs exceptionable; few real occaſions offered to incur his diſpleaſure; ſo general was the diſpoſition among his people to ſubmit implicitly to his will, and to applaud all his actions; but through the whole tenor of his reign, every man's ſafety was precarious, in proportion to his merit, or wealth: not content with being univerſal heir to their effects, and that every thing his ſubjects died poſſeſſed of belonged to him, the innocent inhabitants of whole villages were ſold for ſlaves, to raiſe ſupplies for his extravagance: and although this grievance was repeated at his pleaſure, ſuch was their ſubmiſſion and attachment, that none preſumed to complain. Unreaſonable

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ſuſpicions occupied his breaſt, ſo that they who ſerved him with ſolicitous fidelity, and became eminent by their exploits, and ſucceſs, were generally at length the objects of his envy and horror. Among theſe was *Shampo*, who ſignalized himſelf on many occaſions, and held a conſiderable poſt in the army: he was the darling of the ſoldiers, and every tongue was buſy in his praiſe: ſuch merit could not fail to excite a tyrant's jealouſy. *Ahadee* from that moment determined to cut him off. *Shampo* had a ſiſter in the king's houſe, who, by ſome means, got intimation of the king's deſign: ſhe could have no interview with her brother, for the king's women are forbidden to hold diſcourſe with any man; but as ſhe was at liberty to ſend proviſions for his table, from the royal manſion, ſhe concealed a knife and a cord, with a nooſe on the end of it, among the victuals; from which expreſſive alluſion, her brother was at no loſs to comprehend, that he was doomed to ſuffer, either by the cord, or by the ſabre. He ſaved himſelf by a precipitate flight, and carried a conſiderable part of the army along with him into the

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the *Popoe* country, where he was received in a manner ſuitable to his merit. The *Popoes* promoted him to the command of their army: which poſt he enjoyed to the day of his death in 1767, and bore to the laſt an implacable enmity againſt the ungrateful *Ahadee*.

Agaow, who had ſerved him zealouſly, and executed his orders with great ſucceſs, was leſs fortunate, and fell a victim to his cruelty; the ſame *Agaow*, who had bravely ſtormed the *Portugueſe* fort, who had recovered *Whydah*, and taken *Boagry*: who had in ſome meaſure reſtored the declining glory of the country, and once ſtood ſo high in the eſtimation of his king, that after beſtowing many favors upon him, he was deſirous to let the whole world ſee how much he honored his favorite *Agaow*; and actually gave him leave to build *a houſe two ſtories high*; which, however, the general modeſtly declined.

Where the inhabitants are in ſuch abject ſlavery, that they muſt not ſit upon a chair, becauſe it is an indulgence reſerved for white people, and a few only of the principal men, who enjoy this high privilege, by eſpecial

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grace and favor from the king; where none may presume, on pain of certain death, to have a door of boards for his house, to defend him from the weather; nor to make it decent, by whitewashing the interior part; in *such a country*, to have permission to build a convenient house, is a mark of extraordinary distinction: but *Agaow* did not continue long to enjoy his master's smiles; he was seized and brought before the king, who accused him of an intention to withdraw from the kingdom, and following the evil example of *Shampo* (who had joined the *Popos*), to fly into the country of the *Mahees*. Nothing could be more unjust than this suspicion; and *Agaow*, with a becoming firmness, replied, it is said, to this effect: "I have manifested my zeal on various occasions for "your service; and thought no march fatiguing, no battle hazardous, whilst executing your will; my actions, so often crowned "with success, have added affluence and honor "to your kingdom. What part of my conduct "has exposed me to this accusation? You "have, as pledges of the fidelity of your slave, "my aged mother, my wives and my children

"in

" in your hands. Where, or to whom in pre-
" ference ſhould I go? I have conducted your
" armies, and ſpread deſtruction through all
" the nations around us: is it probable I
" ſhould, throw myſelf into the arms of thoſe
" who tremble at my name? Of thoſe, whoſe
" country I have laid waſte, and led the inha-
" bitants captive, in triumph to your gate?"
The king deſired him to acknowledge him-
ſelf guilty, and truſt to his royal clemency;
Agaow refuſed to atteſt a falſhood, and was
ordered to immediate execution. The per-
ſon whoſe buſineſs it was to perform this
horrid duty, though hackneyed in deeds of
death, was too much ſhocked on this oc-
caſion, to acquit himſelf with propriety; the
ſcimitar failed, in his hand, to perform the
office of beheading, it only mangled, the un-
happy victim. He was ſent back to priſon,
and ſtrangled there. The family of this
brave man are now ſo much reduced, that his
eldeſt ſon was glad to find employment as a
ſervant in my factory.

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CHAP. VIII.

THE *Whydahs*, assisted by the *Popoes*, and directed by the sagacious advice of *Shampo*, became more formidable than ever: they visited the *Whydah* Beach, and gave frequent interruptions to trade. In disputing the possession of *Whydah* Beach, the *Dahomans* were often very roughly handled, and as often returned unsuccessful: they had lost numbers of their men in these skirmishes, when their priests at last discovered, that their oracles had forbidden them to attack the enemy on the *Beach*, but had ordered that they should wait in readiness, between *Griwhee* and the river; and that the party which should first cross the river, and begin the attack, should infallibly be routed. This was no unwelcome discovery, because it afforded a *salvo* for their honor, and an apology for submitting to insults, which they were too weak to resent.

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The king at laſt took the reſolution of making a powerful effort, to reſtrain theſe people; and in 1753, ſome time after the taking of *Boagry*, when a kind of truce with the *Mahees* afforded him ſome leiſure, he ſent a numerous army againſt them. They were provided with ſome canoes, and ſeized others belonging to the enemy, which enabled them to penetrate into their country; but it was a mode of warfare which they did not well underſtand. *Shampo*, who commanded the confederated *Whydahs* and *Popoes*, by pretending to fly, encouraged the *Dahomans* to advance: by degrees they were bewildered among ſwamps, rivers and marſhes, in a wretched country, where proviſions began to fail them: however, they puſhed boldly forward, hoping to bring the enemy to an engagement; but *Shampo* outwitted them; and, by the dexterity of his manœuvres, he drew them on to that narrow ſlip of barren ſand, which reaches nearly from *Volta* to *Benin*, and is from half a mile to three miles in breadth, between the ſea and a river, which runs nearly parallel to the Beach, for about two hundred miles:

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here the retreat of the *Dahomans* was effectually cut off, and the *Popoes* employed themſelves in firing at them at their leiſure, from their canoes; but the greater part periſhed by diſeaſe and famine. They were ſo numerous (ſay the *Popoes*, who perhaps may exaggerate) that the fiſh of the river, aſſiſted by the beaſts, and birds of prey, were not able to eat them all; but their putrid carcaſſes corrupted the air, and occaſioned a peſtilence in the country. The whole army was loſt here, *except twenty-four*, whom *Shampo* ſent back, to acquaint *Ahadee* with the fate of their companions: when they had told their ſad tale, *Ahadee ordered them to immediate execution*, bidding them go expreſs to the ſhades, to inform their comrades how much he diſapproved their conduct in the war!

The next affair of any conſequence that occurred was in 1763, when the old *Whydahs* and *Popoes*, in *their* turn, invaded *Whydah*: *Shampo* himſelf, was too old and infirm to take the field with them, but his ſon commanded; and was accompanied by the whole flower of the *Popoe* chiefs; they advanced into

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into the country without oppoſition, for old *Honnou*, who was then *Eubiga*, or vice-roy, would not venture out to riſk a battle, but remained in *Griwbee* with his men, to defend the town. The *Popoes* were advancing to attack it before he ventured to engage them: he was wounded and carried off the field early in the fight, and the command devolved on *Baddely*, who made a gallant defence, but was obliged to yield to the ſuperior force of the enemy; and retreated with his men towards the French fort, in expectation of being protected by their guns; but he was diſappointed: though the king's honor, and the ſafety of the country were at ſtake, though the enemy had begun to ſet the ſuburbs on fire, the French fired nothing but powder at them. This neutrality, if it deſerved the name, however politic it might be, was certainly not very grateful; for if the manner in which the king uſually treated his own people were never ſo exceptionable, yet the whites had nothing to reproach him with, in his conduct towards them. He was always reſpectful, and generous to a degree of profuſion: in all diſputes between them,

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them, and his ſubjects, if they had but the color of juſtice on their ſide, he determined in their favor: and the complaiſance, civility and reſpect, with which they are univerſally received in his dominions, are greatly owing to his own conſpicuous example.

The *Popoes*, animated by the conduct of the French, advanced boldly: *Baddely* and his men were obliged to fly before them: the *Popoes* thought they had nothing more to fear, and were preparing to burn the vice-roy's quarters; in their way thither, they had to march paſt the Engliſh fort, where Mr. *Goodſon*, the governor, had a warm reception provided for them; which they did not expect: his cannon, loaden with muſket balls, and grape-ſhot, made a prodigious havock among them, and threw them into the utmoſt confuſion; they could not advance, and it was ſome time before they had preſence of mind, to conſult their ſafety by flight. The *Dahomans*, at this inſtant, rallied, having juſt received a conſiderable reinforcement; the *Popoes* had taken them at a diſadvantage, they were not expected on that day, and as it was ſeed-time, the vice-

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roy had permitted half his people in the morning, to go to their plantations; theſe were now returned, and *Baddely* led them on to the purſuit: there could not be a more compleat victory. Of thirty-two general officers, diſtinguiſhed by the large umbrellas which were carried over them, thirty were killed on the ſpot. *Affurrey*, *Shampo*'s ſon, eſcaped from the field; but overwhelmed with grief and ſhame, ſat down beneath a tree and ſhot himſelf; only one ſurvived to conduct the ſhattered remains of their army back. The king had diſpatched *Agaow* and the army down before, but they did not arrive till next day; Mr. *Goodſon* had the ſole merit of the victory, as the king gratefully acknowledged.

The *Dahomans*, now weakened by a long ſeries of unprofitable wars, were unable to follow up their victory; but contented themſelves with driving the enemy out of the country: and the *Popoes* and *Whydahs* having loſt the flower of their men, and of their generals in the late engagement, attempted nothing of moment after this; tho' hoſtilities were continued on a ſmaller ſcale for ſeveral

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ral years: confined merely to plundering parties, and occaſional viſits to *Whydah* Beach; where the effects of the white traders on landing or embarking, ſometimes fell into their hands: but in 1772, a peace was happily concluded, under the mediation of *Lionel Abſon*, Eſq. governor of *William's Fort*, to the mutual advantage of both parties: who after forty years of war, now enjoy the profits and pleaſures of undiſturbed commerce and ſocial intercouſe. This able governor beſtows ſo much attention on this affair, and is ſo circumſpect on the tranſactions of both parties, by whom he is equally reſpected, and acknowledged to be an impartial umpire between them; that whilſt he continues to ſuperintend them, a firm peace may probably continue.

Abadee worn out with years and infirmities, engaged in nothing worth relating after this. He died on the 17th of *May*, 1774; and was ſucceeded by *Adaunzou* II. the preſent king.

A JOURNEY

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A JOURNEY

TO THE COURT OF

BOSSA AHADEE,

KING OF DAHOMY,

In the Year 1772.

WHYDAH, once a flouriſhing and independent kingdom, but now a maritime province of the *Dahoman* empire, is ſituated to the eaſtward of the *Gold Coaſt*; between the rivers *Volta*, and *Benin*. The road in which ſhips that trade there anchor, is in 6 deg. 27 min. north latitude. Landing is always difficult and dangerous, and frequently impracticable for ſeveral weeks together, from the violence of the breakers on the

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the ſhore; and can only be effected in canoes, which the ſhips take with them from the *Gold Coaſt*: they are manned with fifteen or ſeventeen *Fantees* each, hired from *Cape Coaſt* or *El Mina*; hardy, active men, who undertake this buſineſs, and return in their canoe to their own country, when the captain, in whoſe employ they ſerve, has finiſhed his trade.

Grigue or *Griwbee*, the capital of this province, ſituated on a ſandy plain, about three miles from the ſea, is a large, ſtraggling town, which contains about eight thouſand inhabitants. It is the reſidence of the vice-roy, who is aſſiſted in his command by two other Cabocheers, and a military officer of high rank. The Engliſh, French, and Portugueſe have each a fort here, and ſeveral commodious factories, for the accommodation of captains of trading ſhips, who purchaſe here between five and ſix thouſand ſlaves annually.

My buſineſs requiring an interview with the king, I applied to the vice-roy for the neceſſary attendants, and was furniſhed by him with a linguiſt, ſix hammoc men, ten porters, and

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and a captain of the gang; who was reſponſible for the conduct of the others: my own ſervants, and a few others attending on the captain, who were armed, made up our number thirty.

The porters, having each received their ſeveral loads, which conſiſted, beſides a mattreſs, a ſmall trunk of wearing apparel, and ſome proviſions and liquors for myſelf, of a caſe or two of ſpirits which I provided for their own uſe, ſome bags of *cowrie* ſhells (the current money of the country), for defraying our expences, and a few pieces of ſilk for preſents, ſet off by day light; and I got into my hammoc, and commenced my journey to *Abomey* at ſix in the morning of *February* 1, 1772.

In paſſing by the market place, I found a great number of people collected there, and obſerving ſome large umbrellas among them, I concluded that the vice-roy and his Cabocheers were of the party: ſurprized at this early aſſembly, I ſent a ſervant to inquire the occaſion of it; but before he could return, a meſſenger from the vice-roy, who had diſcovered my approach, accoſted me with a meſſage

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meſſage from his maſter, requeſting to ſpeak to me before my departure. I found him paſſing ſentence of death on a criminal, a middle aged woman, who was on her knees before him, in the midſt of a circle formed by his attendants. I requeſted her life might be ſpared; and, from the circumſtance of his having ſent for me, flattered myſelf that my offer to purchaſe her for a ſlave, would be accepted; but I was diſappointed: he told me the king himſelf had conſidered the offence, and decreed the ſentence; which was, "that her head ſhould be cut off, and fixed "upon a ſtake" which was lying by her, and which ſhe had been compelled to bring with her, from *Abomey*, for that purpoſe.

During this converſation a little girl, prompted by curioſity, and ignorant of what was doing, made her way through the crowd; and diſcovering her mother, ran to her with joy to congratulate her on her return. The poor woman, after a ſhort embrace, ſaid, "Go away, child, this is no place for you;" and ſhe was immediately conveyed away. The vice-roy proceeded in his ſentence, which the poor wretch heard with ſeeming indifference,

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indifference, picking her teeth with a ſtraw which ſhe took up from the ground. When the vice-roy concluded his charge to the ſpectators, of obedience, ſubmiſſion and orderly behavior, which the king required from all his people; the delinquent received a blow on the back of her head, with a bludgeon from one of the executioners, which levelled her to the ground; and another ſevered it from the body, with a cutlaſs. The head was then fixed on a pole in the market place, and the body was immediately carried to the outſide of the town, and left there to be devoured by wild beaſts.

The perſon that was executed was one of thoſe who kept a little ſhop in the market; and a few days before, on diſcovering that ſome trifle had been ſtolen from her, ſhe took from the fire a ſmall ſtick, one end of which was burning, and waving it over her head (a uſual cuſtom in the country) exclaimed aloud "Whoever has taken my property, if "they do not return it, I wiſh they may die "and be extinguiſhed like this ſtick." In going through this ceremony, a ſpark fell on

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the dry thatch of one of the huts, and ſet the market on fire.

After a delay of half an hour on this diſagreeable occaſion, I reſumed my journey. The face of the country, though flat, is extremely agreeable; it is moſtly open, and a conſiderable portion of it cultivated, interſperſed with ſome clumps and groves of lofty and luxuriant trees. In an hour and an half we approached the town of *Xavier*, which is environed with plantations of yams, potatoes, callivances, and corn; for which there is a ready market at *Griwhee*.

Before the *Dahomy* conqueſt in 1727, when *Whydah* was an independent kingdom, this was the reſidence of the kings of *Whydah*, and the Engliſh, French, Dutch, and Portugueſe had forts or factories here, on which thoſe at *Griwhee* were dependent: but theſe were abandoned on that event, and the guns removed by the conqueror, *Guadja Trudo*, to his palaces at *Ardra*, *Calmina*, and *Abomey*: no veſtige of them now remains, but the moats which ſurrounded them. The ſite of the palace of the *Whydah* kings can alſo ſtill be aſcertained, by the trench which encompaſſed

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paſſed it: the place is now overgrown with lofty trees, and is held ſacred by the repreſentatives of that unfortunate family, who live in exile with the remains of their countrymen in the vicinity of *Popoe*; and on his acceſſion to the government of his few and needy vaſſals, the new king muſt come to this ſpot to be inaugurated.

All writers who have deſcribed this country, extol its natural beauties and the fertility of its ſoil; previous to the conqueſt it is ſaid to have been ſo extremely populous that land was claimed as private property; and the inhabitants, from their great advantages in commerce (this being the great mart of trade for a very extenſive tract of the interior country), are ſaid to have abounded in riches. An anecdote which I have heard of the laſt king of *Whydah*, from the old people of the country, confirms his wealth in ſome degree.

When Capt. *Ogle* (afterwards Sir Chaloner) was ſent in 1722, in the *Swallow* man of war, to the coaſt of Africa, in queſt of *Roberts*, the pirate, he landed at *Whydah*, and acquainted the king with the purpoſe of his

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errand. The king told him, "If he ſhould "ſecure that raſcal *Roberts*, who had long "infeſted his coaſt, he would give him fifty-"ſix pounds of gold duſt," pointing to an iron half hundred weight that lay near him, which was to aſcertain the quantity. Capt. *Ogle* fell in with and took *Roberts*'s ſhip, the *Royal Fortune*, at *Cape Lopez*; *Roberts* was killed in the engagement; the pirates were tried and condemned at *Cape Coaſt*, where moſt of them were executed; but half a dozen of them were carried to *Whydah*, and hanged there; and the king diſcharged his promiſe by giving Capt. *Ogle* the handſome reward he had promiſed him.

We made no halt at *Xavier*, the hammock men chuſing to jog on at their uſual rate of about five miles per hour; relieving each other occaſionally. From thence to *Toree* took up two hours. It is but a ſmall town, and, being a convenient ſtage, the inhabitants derive ſome advantage from ſupplying travellers with refreſhment. It is ſeparated from the province of *Whydah* by a pretty deep and rapid river, whoſe banks are covered with ſtately trees, and a great deal of cloſe underwood,

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underwood, which afford a convenient ſhelter to elephants, of which there are plenty hereabouts.

This river was formerly the northern boundary of the *Whydah* kingdom; and when the *Dahomans* croſſed it, inſtead of diſputing the paſſage, or riſking a battle in defence of their country, the infatuated *Whydahs* contented themſelves with placing, with great ceremony, the fetiſh ſnake in the path, to oppoſe the invading army; which not anſwering their hopes and expectations, they deemed all other reſiſtance vain, and fled precipitately before the conqueror. We croſſed the river over a tolerably good bridge, formed by wooden piles placed at proper diſtances, and covered with faggots and hurdles.

Here we overtook our porters, and the hammoc men being diſpoſed to take a little reſt and refreſhment, I intended to amuſe myſelf with ſtrolling through the town, and viewing it. Though I purpoſed to be alone, I found myſelf followed by my captain; on telling him I did not require his attendance then, and that he might remain with his

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companions, he replied, that "the *Torees* "were a ſtrange ſort of people, and had bad "cuſtoms; and, as he had to anſwer with "his head for my ſafety, he would not truſt "me alone among a people who made a "practice of eating men:" though I was pretty certain his fears for me were unneceſſary, yet to make him eaſy I returned to my party, reflecting on the prejudices which people reſiding at not more than twenty miles diſtance entertained of their neighbours.

When the hammoc men had reſted a little, and taken a ſlight repaſt, we reſumed our journey, and proceeded to a ſmall town, called *Azoway*, which we reached in a couple of hours; the road very good, but no ſettlements or plantations between the two places; and as the country was covered with thick woods, and the graſs grew luxuriantly, higher than our heads, which prevented a free circulation of air, I found the heat, now that the ſun had gained the meridian, ſo extremely fatiguing, that when we reached *Azoway*, I readily conſented to the hammoc men's propoſal, of having my hammoc ſuſpended under the ſhade of a ſpreading

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ing tree, whilſt they went to bathe in an adjoining river, which refreſhed them exceedingly; and we proceeded with freſh ſpirits for *Ardra*, which we reached in two hours.

Ardra was once the capital of a great and powerful kingdom, whoſe dominion extended from *Volta* to *Benin*: it is pleaſantly ſituated on a gently riſing eminence of gravelly ſoil. A prodigious number of palm trees grow in the neighbourhood of it, which add greatly to the beauty of the proſpect, and ſupply the inhabitants with great quantities of the oil, which they bring to market at *Whydah* in large callebaſhes that contain from five to ten or twelve gallons each. The king and ſeveral of his great men have houſes here; but they ſeldom viſit them, and it is now greatly reduced from what it formerly was.

I was conducted to apartments in a houſe belonging to one of the king's officers, which are appropriated to the accommodation of white men on their journey, and was preſented, by the man who had the care of it, with a jar of cool water, and a pot of the country beer, called *pitto*; which favor I

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acknowledged, by returning a flask of brandy.

Here we resolved to stop for the day, and my retinue, having deposited their baggage in my apartment, and suspended the cotton hammoc in which I travelled, with the mattress in it, for my night's lodging, went to the quarters provided for them, and left me to recover, in silence and retirement, from the fatigues of the day; nor was I interrupted by any impertinent curiosity of the town's-people during the remainder of it, and passed the night without even a bolt to the door, in the most perfect security. My sleep, however, was greatly interrupted by the incessant howling, roaring and barking of wild beasts, particularly the jackals, called by the natives *tweetwees* who, as if it had been its regular police, continued prowling through the town during the whole night, and disturbed us with their execrable cries. They are fierce, voracious animals, about the size of a large mastiff dog, but much stronger in all their parts, particularly the jaws, teeth and legs, which are remarkably strong: their feet are very large, and armed with

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with formidable claws. They quit their retreats in the woods ſoon after dark, and range in troops through the towns and plantations, in queſt of food: any domeſtic animal that is not ſecured in a houſe, or at leaſt within high walls, is ſure to become their prey; but ſcarcely any thing comes amiſs to them: when they cannot get better fare, they eat any kind of traſh. I have frequently ſeen the ſtomachs of thoſe that have been killed, full of pieces of broken callebaſhes that had once contained oil in them; and of old dry cow-hides, that had been uſed for covering the rolls of Portugueſe tobacco. They are the greateſt devourers of the carcaſes of thoſe who are executed as criminals, or ſacrificed at the public feſtivals.

They readily diſcover dead bodies that are interred, and drag them out of their graves: this is a joint operation of ſeveral; and when they have got their prey before them, they dance and caper round it with great exultation for ſome time, before they devour it. When any of them ſingly falls in with a booty, he changes the horrid roaring which he uſed in the purſuit, to another vile note, which

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which is to ſummon his companions to come, and partake with him; and it is by the ſame note they announce the diſcovery of a human grave, and collect a party to explore its contents. I never knew an inſtance where they attacked a cow, that they did not ſeize the *udder* firſt; and in *Whydah*, where they are very numerous, I have often known cows reſcued from them, with the loſs of that part, by the ſpeedy exertions of the people running immediately to the place where the piteous bellowings of the poor animal directed them. I am ſurprized, that Monſ. *Buffon* ſhould omit to mention, that though this animal has a ſtrong reſemblance in figure to the wolf, and canine ſpecies, it differs from them in a ſtriking feature, by having only two teats, which are placed one on each ſide of the breaſt, like a monkey *.

* Mirifica pudendorum conformatio extat. A fœmina, mas haud facile dignoſci poteſt. Latitant penis ac teſtes intus, ſubter cutem hypogaſtricam. Per foramen effluit urina; peniſque in coitu detruditur. Tantam autem rima labiis muliebribus profert ſimilitudinem, ut, ſpecie prima, valde ambiguum ſexus eſtimetur, et quaſi *Hermaphroditicum*.

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The kingdom of *Ardra* was reduced, both in extent and power, by the revolt and ſeparation of ſeveral provinces, before it was attacked by the *Dahomans*, under *Guadja Trudo*, in 1725. However, the *Ardras* made an obſtinate reſiſtance, and are ſaid to have loſt fifty thouſand men in a battle near this town, which laſted *three days*, before they were ſubdued.

Early on the next morning, (February 2d) we continued our journey acroſs a very agreeable country, and having paſſed through two villages, ſtopped at a town called *Havee* and breakfaſted: it is but an inconſiderable place, though the king has a houſe in it. Our ſtay here was no longer than neceſſary, and we proceeded to *Whybow*; which place, I reached about ten o'clock, and was kindly received by the hoſpitable old Cabocheer, who provided an excellent dinner for me, and gave my whole retinue abundant proof of his liberality, by ſupplying them plentifully with good cheer. This old man's name was *Jabrakou*; he had been a warrior in his youth, and having acquitted himſelf with reputation, was rewarded with the government of this

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this town. I found him a keen ſportſman: he did not like domeſtic animals, he ſaid, but the chace furniſhed him with a variety of delicacies, and he ſhewed me his larder, which was well ſtored with buffalo, veniſon of different ſizes, and ſorts, wild hog, and *Agouti*, or *Buſh-Cat*; of all theſe he preſſed me to partake, for my journey, which though I declined as having no occaſion for, yet on coming away, he inſiſted on my accepting a couple of nice guiney fowls, which, he ſaid, he had ordered to be roaſted for my ſupper. It was with much difficulty I prevailed upon him to accept a ſmall preſent in return; which he refuſed to do, until I promiſed to ſpend a few days with him on a hunting party, at my return.

I recollect *Monſieur Buffon* ſays, the *Aguti* is peculiar to the new world; and is found no where but in *America*. They are gregarious animals, abound in this part of *Africa*, and are eſteemed a great dainty by the natives. The *Buſh-cat*, (by which name it is diſtinguiſhed among the Britiſh traders at this coaſt) approaches nearly in the length of its body, to that of a full grown hare, and

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and is rather thicker. The body, when diveſted of its ſkin, appears incaſed with fat, like a hog. The tail is ſhort, and not buſhy. I do not remember the number of its claws; but the feet are ſmall, and do not ſeem formed for burrowing in the earth. The hinder legs are longer than the fore ones, and the ears are rounded and ſhort. The lads who ſeized and brought them to me for ſale, related that the practice was to wait for theſe animals in their haunts, morning and evening. That they were generally ſeen in companies (or probably families) of fifteen, or twenty, following one another in the ſame path. The head-moſt were ſuffered to paſs on unmoleſted, and then an aſſault was made upon the rear of the party with ſticks; and by this manœuvre, two or three were uſually taken priſoners. On my aſking the reaſon, why they did not make their firſt attack upon the leaders? they replied, that in ſuch caſe, the aſſailants would be expoſed to the fury of all that followed; and that their bite was extremely ſevere: this, I was induced to believe, as they are furniſhed with two very formidable inciſory teeth in the

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the upper jaw. But by beginning with the rear, there was little danger, becauſe, thoſe which were already paſſed, continued to march on, without diſturbing themſelves about the fate of their companions. The muzzle of the *Buſh-cat* (except that the upper lip is divided like that of a hare) is not very unlike that of a rat; the upper jaw projecting conſiderably beyond the lower. Inſtead of ſoft hair, they are covered with harſh, coarſe, ſtiff briſtles, which adhere ſo ſlightly to the ſkin, as to be ſeparated by a ſlight touch. This creature is endued with a power of erecting its briſtles, which are of a browniſh colour, *clouded with dark ſpots*. It is on the authority of the *Braſilian* Portugueſe captains who trade at *Whydah*, that I ſuppoſe this animal to be the *Agouti*; for theſe perſons aſſured me, that it is not at all different from thoſe which are ſo common in *Braſil*; and the French captains, who had been at *Cayenne*, concurred in the ſame opinion. The African *Agouti*, is very fat, and its fleſh taſtes greaſy, and ſtrong, unleſs it has been cured by ſmoak; which is a preparation

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preparation that makes it exceedingly palatable. *

Having ſtaid with my old friend until evening, I ſet off for *Appoy*, which is an hour and a half's journey; and lodged there, in a houſe provided by the king's order, for the accommodation of white people. I was now come to the diſagreeable and truly fatiguing part of the journey, and judged ſome

* *Piſo (Hiſt. Nat. lib.* 3.) enumerates five ſpecies of the *Lepus* in *Braſil*; of which the *Agouti* is the third. In the circumſtances particularly of its bulk and ſpots, the *Buſh-cat* of *Whydah* ſeems to have a nearer reſemblance to the *Paca*, which ſtands foremoſt in his claſſification. The American *Agouti* is rather a ſmaller animal; has ſhort round ears; its hinder feet are armed with ſix claws, and its anterior with only four: when it is eating, it holds the food between its fore paws, and ſits erect on its haunches. It produces ſeventeen young ones at a litter, thrice in the year. In *Pere Labat's Voyage aux Iſles de l'Amerique*, is a bad figure of it; but his deſcription is very correct. He ſpeaks of three ſpecies obſerved in the *Carib* iſlands. *Peter Martyr* allots the ſame number to the iſland of *S. Domingo*: they were the common food of the Indians, who called them the *Uti*, or *Outi*, which ſcarcely differs from the continental name, *Acouti*.

That it is common to *Africa* and *America*, is a curious fact. Are we to ſuppoſe, that there once exiſted an actual junction

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ſome reſt neceſſary, previous to entering upon it. Here the *great wood* commences, through which, the path is ſo narrow, crooked, and bad, that it is impoſſible to be

junction of the two continents? Or, that an intercourſe of navigation prevailed between them in remote ages, prior to any hiſtory or tradition that has reached us? To the former ſuppoſition it will be objected, that the elephant, and other quadrupeds of *Africa*, have never (as far as we are informed) been ſeen in *America*, either by the Indian Aborigines, or by the firſt European diſcoverers; and that *America*, in its turn, poſſeſſes ſome not yet known to exiſt in *Africa*; as the *tamandua*, &c. Navigators, indeed, might tranſport from one country to the other, a breed of the ſmaller eſculent quadrupeds, as the *Agouti* for example. This is a ſubject upon which a great deal of various conjecture may be hazarded; but of which nothing can now, with certainty be known.

Father *Labat*, who was an admirer of good cheer, and not uninſtructed in the art of cookery, has given a receipt for the beſt manner of dreſſing this animal. He tells us, that "firſt of all it is to be ſcalded with milk, like a pig; "and, when intended for the ſpit, great care muſt be taken "to fill its paunch with a rich ſtuffing, compoſed of the "harſlet mixed with yolks of eggs, ſweet herbs, and ſpicery. "I have eaten it, ſays he, many a time, dreſſed according "to this, and other faſhions, and always found it an ex-"cellent diſh, and of eaſy digeſtion." Tom. III. fo. 25.

carried

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carried in a hammoc, even at the preſent, which is the beſt and drieſt ſeaſon of the year.

We entered the wood at three o'clock in the morning, February 3d, with the advantage of a bright moon, and ſerene ſky. The captain of the guard diſpoſed his men, ſome in front, ſome in the rear, with loaded muſkets, to defend us from the attacks of wild beaſts, with which this dreary wood abounds; two of the hammoc men, carrying lanthorns with lighted candles in them, on each ſide of me, on which the natives have great reliance for terrifying the beaſts of prey: the whole party ſinging, and ſhouting as loud as they could bellow; blowing their trumpets, and firing muſkets occaſionally, which, with the chattering of monkeys, alarmed at our approach, the ſqualling of parrots, the roaring of wild beaſts, and the craſhing and ruſtling of elephants through the underwood, formed the moſt horrid diſcord that could be conceived.

After a fatiguing march of five hours, we reached *Agrimee*, a ſmall town on the oppoſite ſide of the wood; where we halted ſome

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time, to breakfaſt; and then reſumed our journey to *Calmina*, which we reached in two hours. *Calmina* is a large town, and may contain about fifteen thouſand inhabitants. The king frequently reſides here, and has a ſpacious houſe, which occupies with its appendages, almoſt as much ground as *St. James's Park*: it is incloſed with a high mud wall, which forms nearly a ſquare. On a former viſit, I meaſured one ſide of it, and found it *one thouſand ſeven hundred* paces long; in the centre is a gateway, and large guard-houſe, on the roof of which, are expoſed, a great number of the ſkulls of priſoners taken in war.

At *Calmina*, I was introduced into apartments in *Mayhou*'s houſe, where I met a meſſenger from him, with compliments, to congratulate me on my ſafe arrival; and deſiring to be informed, what time I propoſed to enter *Abomey*, and whether I would conſent to be received *in ſtate*, by the great officers of the court? which ceremony, conſiſts of the prime miniſter, and other head men, coming out about half a mile, on horſeback, with numerous attendants, under arms; who perform

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perform their military exerciſe, and fire a few rounds of muſketry; after which, the great men alight, and receive the ſtranger under the ſhade of large umbrellas; preſent him firſt with a tumbler of cool water, and afterwards with a ſmall glaſs of ſpirits; which is drank to the king's health; and then they proceed on foot, to accompany him into the town.

I declined this honor, as agreeing but badly with my preſent fatigue; and diſmiſſed the meſſenger, charged with compliments on my part, to his maſter; and remained there till evening. In the interim, an old lady of the houſe provided me with an excellent dinner, which came very ſeaſonably, as the porters, with my proviſions, did not arrive in time, owing to their fatigue in croſſing the wood.

I left *Calmina* at five in the evening, and proſecuted my journey for *Abomey*, which I reached in two hours: the intermediate country is cleared of trees, and the road, which is an excellent one, lying high, affords a very pleaſing proſpect of the country, which I found in high cultivation,

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chiefly of corn and callivances, for the ſupply of the adjoining towns. Half way, between *Calmina* and *Abomey*, is a country houſe of the king's, and a village called *Dawhee*; which was the ancient reſidence of his family, and the capital of their little territory, before they emerged from their original obſcurity; when his anceſtor, *Tacodonou*, early in the laſt century, gained *Calmina* by treachery, and *Abomey* by force of arms; which laid the foundation of the *Daboman* greatneſs.

On my arrival at the gate of *Abomey*, I was ſaluted with fifteen guns, and conducted to the white men's apartments in *Mayhou*'s houſe; whoſe ſteward waited on me, with a preſent from his maſter, of a jar of cool water, a pot of *pitto*, and ſome fowls. *Mayhou* ſoon made his appearance, accompanied by *Eubigah* the vice-roy of *Whydah*, and preſented the king's compliments on my ſafe arrival, and eſcape from accidents, or ſickneſs on the journey; which was followed by a preſent from the king, of a ſheep, ſome fowls, two jars of *pitto*, two baſkets of corn-

flour,

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flour, a callebaſh of palm oil, one of ſalt, and a flaſk of brandy.

Having had occaſion to mention *Maybou's* name, it may be neceſſary to explain his office, and that of a few others, who will be introduced in the ſequel. The prime miniſter is called *Tamegah*: he is the firſt civil officer of the ſtate, and ranks immediately after the king: he is the *only* perſon in his dominions whoſe head the king may not take off at his pleaſure. It is *Tamegah's* duty to aſſiſt the king with his advice, and to aid him in the cares of government. Upon the deceaſe of the king, he, and *Maybou*, have the power of appointing which of his ſons is to ſucceed to the government: though the firſt ſon born after his father's acceſſion, is deemed the heir apparent, yet, if *they* think him unworthy to ſucceed, they have a right to confer the ſovereignty on ſome one of his brothers, whom they judge poſſeſſed of ſuperior merit and abilities. The next in rank is ſtiled *Maybou*; he is alſo a counſellor of the king, and acts as maſter of the ceremonies; he directs, or ſuperintends the public feſtivals of the court; and has the care

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of all ſtrangers that viſit *Dahomy*, whether Europeans, Moors, or Negro ambaſſadors from neighbouring ſtates. *Tamegah*, and he, are judges in criminal caſes; and one, or other of them, are almoſt conſtantly with the king, informing him of every circumſtance that paſſes. *Agaow* is commander in chief of the army. *Eubigah* is vice-roy of *Whydah*: the literal traſlation of his title is, "*Captain of the white men.*" *Jahou*, is maſter of the horſe: he has the care of criminals, and is to ſee their puniſhments inflicted; he has alſo the ſuperintendance of the plantations, which ſupply the king's houſhold with proviſions; and to ſee that the *women who are to cultivate them* are not remiſs in the diſcarge of their duty. Theſe are the principal perſonages of the kingdom; to which offices they have no hereditary claim, being appointed to them by the king's particular favor, ariſing from the opinion he entertains of their qualifications and abilities.

The court was engaged at this time in the celebration of a grand feſtival, which continues ſeveral weeks, and is called "*the annual cuſtoms*;" *when the king, waters the graves*

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graves of his anceſtors with the blood of many human victims. The governors of the forts at *Whydah* are expected to attend, and make a preſent on the occaſion; which ſhould conſiſt of at leaſt one piece of Indian damaſk, or ſome other handſome ſilk: the vice-roy of *Whydah*, and the governors of the different towns and provinces, muſt be there with their preſents alſo, and give an account of their conduct, and of every circumſtance which the king wiſhes to be informed of. They who acquit themſelves to his ſatisfaction, have the honor to receive ſome mark of his approbation; which is generally a large cotton cloth, manufactured in the *Eyo* country, of excellent workmanſhip, which they afterwards wear for an upper garment. The black merchants, or trading men, and indeed every head of a family muſt alſo attend for a few days, and bring a quantity of *cowries*, proportioned to their circumſtances: each of them endeavours to make his preſent (which is in fact a *tax*) as reſpectable as he can; and would be reprimanded, or perhaps puniſhed, if he did not do ſo. They are all attended by their domeſtics, and the

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young fellows among them, who are deſirous of having female companions, bring, each, the ſavings of their induſtry, if it amounts to five *cabeſs*, or twenty thouſand *cowries*, which they lay before the king's gate; and proſtrating themſelves in the duſt, beg to be favored with wives; which is generally complied with. The females are handed out from the palace, and diſtributed among the petitioners; and the *cowries* received in return. Each muſt take the female that is aſſigned him; be ſhe old, or young; handſome or deformed; he is obliged to receive her: ſometimes, I have known the king's wives, who are the agents in this buſineſs, hand out in malicious ſport, the man's mother to him, whom he muſt maintain afterwards; and wait, content, till his circumſtances enable him to try his luck on ſome future occaſion.

The ſtate principles from which this mode of ſupplying wives is derived is, that "*parents have no ſort of property in their children in the Dahoman territories:*" they "*belong entirely to the king,*" and are taken from their mothers, at an early age, and diſtributed

buted in villages remote from the places of their nativity; where they remain ſubject to *his* future appropriation of them, with but little chance of their being ever ſeen, or at leaſt recognized by their parents, afterwards. The motive for this, is, that there may be no family connections, or combinations; no aſſociations, that might be injurious to the king's unlimited power. Hence, each individual is detached, and unconnected; and having no relative for whom he is intereſted, is ſolicitous only for his own ſafety; which he conſults, by the moſt abject ſubmiſſion, and obedience. Here, paternal affections, and filial love ſcarcely exiſt. Mothers, inſtead of cheriſhing, endeavour to ſuppreſs thoſe attachments for their offspring which they know will be violated, as ſoon as their children are able to undergo the fatigue of being removed from them.

On the annual return of the *Cuſtoms* (at which *all* muſt attend, unleſs prevented by ſickneſs), every perſon being immediately in the king's power, they who have been guilty of any delinquency, are apprehended without

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out any trouble; and an inquiry into ſmall offences is frequently deferred to that time; but on a ſuſpicion of crimes that merit immediate inquiry, ſuch as imprudent familiarity with the king's women; witchraft, or theft; the offender is viſited by certain meſſengers, called *half-heads*; (from having one half of their heads ſhaved, and the hair permitted to grow to its full length on the other; which, with half a dozen ſtrings of human teeth that reach from the right ſhoulder acroſs the breaſt and back to the oppoſite knee, gives them a ſtrange appearance) theſe meſſengers hear the merits of the caſe before the magiſtrate of the town; and if the offence is proved, they either carry the criminal's head with them, in a bag, to ſhew the king that ſentence has been executed; or conduct him to the capital, to receive his puniſhment there.

At this time too, the king informs himſelf particularly, of the behavior of each of his ſlaves; the meaneſt of whom have acceſs to him upon this occaſion; and, if injured, has an opportunity of applying perſonally, and in private for redreſs; which is a check on the

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the conduct of those in power, and, no doubt, prevents them from oppressing their inferiors. There are indeed but few instances of personal injuries in this country; for as they are *all* slaves to the king, those who enjoy any pre-eminence are cautious how they abuse their fellow slaves, lest they incur the displeasure of their common master: and from this terror, in quarrels between equals, they content themselves with expressing their indignation in mutual invective; and rarely proceed to blows, lest a *king's slave* should be hurt; which would be of serious consequences to the aggressor.

I was suffered to remain uninterrupted in my apartments the day after my arrival, to recover from the fatigue of the journey; except, that towards evening, an old man begged leave to come in; and approaching with great respect, produced a small callebash, containing a few pebbles, which he turned out upon the floor, and, counting them deliberately over, shewed me there were fifteen of them; which, I recollected, was the *number of guns* that were fired on the preceding evening; and finding that he was the

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the gunner, I paid him his perquiſite of an *ackey of cowries*, and a flaſk of brandy; and deſired him to ſhew me his artillery, to which he readily agreed, and conducted me to an open ſpace in the town, where I found twenty-two two pounders, and two ſixes, without any carriages; not arranged for defence, but lying on logs of wood, to be fired occaſionally for ſalutes, and on public rejoicings.

The town is large, and may contain about *twenty-four thouſand* inhabitants. It is built without any order, or the leaſt regard paid to the regularity of the ſtreets. A number of ſmall huts for the women, and a ſhady piazza or two for the maſter, the whole incloſed with a high *mud wall*, form the accommodations of each family. It is ſituated upon a dry gravelly plain, and is ſupplied with water from a rivulet near two miles off, which makes that article dear; and a number of *women* are employed in carrying it round the town, in earthen pots, to ſell. The town is ſurrounded by a wide and deep ditch, but has no breaſt-work; nor does it appear how they have diſpoſed of the clay that has been dug out of it, unleſs it has been

expended

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expended in conſtructing the mud walls of their houſes. There are, in different places, four *wooden* bridges acroſs this ditch, and a guard houſe at each, in which ſome ſoldiers are ſtationed.

The king has two houſes, called *Dahomy* and *Gringomy*, in the town, and another without the gates, called *Dampogey*; they are about the ſame dimenſions as that at *Calmina*; and, like it, are incloſed by a *mud wall*, about twenty feet high. In paſſing the guard houſe at the door of *Gringomy* houſe I obſerved a great number of human ſkulls, fixed on ſmall ſtakes on the roof of it: they were the heads of priſoners taken in war. On each ſide of the door was a pile of human heads, at leaſt fifty in each; and at a few yards diſtance, oppoſite to the door, was a ſmall ſtage about ten feet high, on which lay about two dozen heads of unfortunate victims, who had been ſacrificed a few days before, at ſome of the late feſtivals.

On my return, I received a meſſage from the king, who deſired to ſee me next morning in *Dahomy* houſe. I prepared, accordingly, for my viſit, by unpacking a very handſome

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handſome ſedan chair, and a chamber organ, which I had previouſly ſent up from *Whydah*. Theſe I ſent early in the morning by my porters to the palace, and followed them, at ten o'clock, February 5, accompanied by my linguiſt. I was received at the door by *Mayhou*; on each ſide of it was a human head, *recently cut off*, lying on a flat ſtone, with the face down, and the bloody end of the neck towards the entrance. In the guard houſe were about forty women, armed with a muſket and cutlaſs each; and twenty eunuchs, with bright iron rods in their hands; one of whom ſlipped away, to announce my arrival; and *Mayhou*, walking cautiouſly forward, conducted me through the firſt court to a door, near which were two more heads; where, he proſtrated himſelf, and kiſſed the ground; on which it was opened by a female, and we entered a ſecond court, two ſides of which were formed by long ſhady piazzas: in this we were met by *Tamegah* and *Eubigah*, who, with *Mayhou*, frequently knelt down, and kiſſed the ground, pronouncing aloud ſome of the king's titles, as we walked acroſs this court, in which were ranged ſix human heads.

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heads. From this we paſſed through a third door into the court, where the king was ſeated, on a handſome chair of crimſon velvet, ornamented with gold fringe, placed on a carpet, in a ſpacious cool piazza, which occupied one ſide of the court. He was ſmoking tobacco, and had on a gold laced hat, with a plume of oſtrich feathers; he wore a rich crimſon damaſk robe, wrapped looſely round him; yellow ſlippers, and no ſtockings: ſeveral women were employed fanning him, and others with whiſks, to chace away the flies: one woman, on her knees before him, held a gold cup, for him to ſpit in.

When the door, which led into this court was opened, *Tamegah* and his two companions immediately fell down, rubbed their foreheads in the duſt, kiſſed the ground repeatedly, and approached the king crawling on their hands and knees, proſtrating themſelves frequently, and throwing the duſt plentifully with both hands upon their heads: had it been mud from preceding rain, the ſame ceremony would have been performed.

Having bowed to the king, I was directed to

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to a chair a few yards from him; and having drank his health in a ſmall glaſs of brandy; and he mine, he inquired after the health of his brother, *King George*, of *England*; and aſked ſome queſtions reſpecting my voyage. We converſed through the medium of my ſervant, who acted as interpreter, and *Maybou*; who firſt kiſſed the ground, before he preſumed to repeat the king's words to my ſervant: a cuſtom always obſerved in every part of the country, as well as in the royal preſence, when a perſon has occaſion to repeat the king's words, or deliver any meſſage or order of his. After ſome converſation, he deſired me to let him hear the organ, and appeared much pleaſed with the tunes. I then explained the uſe of the ſedan chair, which I repreſented as much more convenient than hammocs, which he generally uſed. Half a dozen of his hammoc men were then introduced, crawling on their hands and knees; and by his deſire, I went into the ſedan, and directing them what to do, was carried by them all in turns, until they appeared to be pretty expert at their buſineſs: he then went into it himſelf, and was carried

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ried repeatedly round the court, amidſt the ſhouts and acclamations of his miniſters, his women, and his hammoc men. It was a ſmart ſhowy thing, covered with red morocco leather, and lined with white ſilk. He was aſtoniſhingly delighted with it, and diverted himſelf with opening and drawing the curtains, which he deemed a moſt ingenious contrivance; at laſt, in the exultation of his ſoul, ſome of the eunuchs were called in to ſupply the place of the hammoc men, and the door leading from the piazza to his private apartments being opened, he was carried by them to diſplay his finery among his women; and I had permiſſion to depart: his nobles retiring in the ſame abject manner which they obſerved in approaching him. In the evening, I purchaſed thirty-two ſlaves, which finiſhed the buſineſs of the day.

On the next morning (February 6) I had an invitation to come, if it was agreeable, and be a ſpectator of ſome *amuſements* at the king's gate, at *Gringomy*, which I accepted, as I underſtood that *Agaow* (the general) had returned, in the preceding night, from an expedition againſt the *Mahees*, and had

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brought ſome priſoners, which I wiſhed to inquire about. I found *Tamegah*, *Mayhou*, *Eubigah*, *Agaow*, and *Jahou* ſeated on ſtools, placed on leopard's ſkins, at the king's gate, and ſheltered under large umbrellas from the ſun. An accommodation of the ſame ſort was provided for me. A large concourſe of people was aſſembled, but I found it was not a time, or place for buſineſs, ſo entertained myſelf with the droll diſtortions, and antic dances of a multitude of people, to the harſh muſic of a variety of inſtruments: amidſt all this feſtivity, ſhould a man's foot ſlip, and ſhould he tumble and get a fall, which are regarded as bad omens, the poor wretch is immediately taken out of the crowd, and his head is ſtruck off, without any interruption to the dance, which goes on, as if nothing had happened. To theſe ſucceeded a troop of about two hundred and fifty females, whoſe motions and grimaces were ſtill more comic, if poſſible, than what had preceded. This band was compoſed of ladies of pleaſure, ordered to be ſuch by royal authority. This is a precaution taken by government to prevent the peace of private families being violated,

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violated, and is perhaps more neceſſary here, than in any other ſtate; as *adultery* is ſeverely puniſhed, and every indiſcretion of gallantry, expoſes the delinquents to *death*, or *ſlavery*; eſpecially too, as the people of rank, engroſs the major part of the women. The king's ſeraglio conſiſts of between three and four thouſand; his principal men, have from one to three or four hundred wives each; and people in humbler ſtations from half a dozen, to twenty: from this unequal diſtribution, in which the rights of mankind are infringed, and their wants egregiouſly miſcalculated, the lower claſs remain unprovided with female companions; but in every town there is a certain number of women, proportioned to its ſize, who are to be obliging to every cuſtomer that offers: the price of their favors is regulated, and very moderate; and though theſe poor creatures pay a heavy tax annually, which was the occaſion of their being convened at preſent, yet by having ſmall beer, and breeding poultry added to what their occupation brings in, they are enabled to live; and I am inclined to think there are wretches in

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the world, of the ſame profeſſion, more miſerable than they are.

Whatever entertainment this ſcene might afford, was damped, by my ſervant's officiouſly pointing out ſeven horſes, and the ſame number of men with their ankles and wriſts ſecured round tall poſts fixed in the ground; where they were to remain, till the night preceding the next feſtival; when, both men and horſes were to have their heads ſtruck off: theſe unhappy victims, though conſcious of their impending fate, were not indifferent to the muſic, which they ſeemed to enjoy, by endeavoring to beat time to it. I ſoon took my leave and quitted this ſcene of diſtreſs; but had not proceeded far, before I was almoſt ſuffocated by an inſupportable ſtench; which, upon looking round, I found to proceed from the heads of *thirty-two horſes* and *thirty-ſix men who had been maſſacred on two preceding feſtivals*, not for any crime of theirs, but as a ſacrifice to the miſtaken grandeur of the king, and agreeable to *cuſtom immemorial*. Directing my courſe from thence towards the market place, I found at the entrance of it two gibbets, about

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about twenty feet high; with a murdered man hanging naked by the ankles to each; and at the other end of the market, two other gibbets furniſhed in the ſame manner. Theſe poor wretches, were put to death by blows of heavy clubs on the head, and had their privities cut cloſe off, that the delicacy of the king's women, who had to march under them in proceſſion on a feſtival, about eight days before, might not be offended. The birds of prey were tearing out their bowels, and devouring them piecemeal; which the natives looked at without the leaſt emotion, only admiring the grandeur of the king, who could defray the expence of ſuch exhibitions. I obſerved in the market, that the fleſh of *dogs* was expoſed for ſale here, as well as in *Whydah*, in common with that of other animals.

February 7th. Early this morning I went to the gate of *Dahomy* houſe to ſee a proceſſion of the king's women, who came out, in number about ſeven hundred, neatly dreſſed, and danced in the parade before the guard-houſe; where a number of men under arms were drawn up at a diſtance, to

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prevent the populace from approaching them. Upon their retiring, *Agaow* advanced with about five thouſand men under arms, who went through the various evolutions of their exerciſe; and concluded with a general dance, and ſome war-ſongs. After which I went in to pay my reſpects to the king, and by his deſire played over the tunes on the chamber organ; it had three barrels, which made it rather too complicated a buſineſs for him. It played ſeveral agreeable tunes, and ſome ſelect marches, but he preferred the *hundred and fourth pſalm;* and I fixed the barrel, at his requeſt, to that, for his future amuſement.

February 8th. This morning I received a meſſage from the king to wait on him in *Dahomy* houſe, which I did, and found him ſitting in a piazza, dreſſed in a ſilk night-gown; having bowed to him, I was directed to a chair, where ſome ſlaves were ready to hold a large umbrella over me. The king was attended by his great officers of ſtate, and the parade crowded with a multitude of the populace. At a little diſtance from me ſat a dozen ſwarthy men with turbans on their heads,

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heads, they wore looſe cotton ſhirts made like ſurplices, long looſe drawers or trowſers of the ſame, and Morocco leather ſlippers. Theſe people are called here *Mallays*; they ſpeak, and write Arabic, and are ſuppoſed to come from the northern part of *Africa*, from the confines of *Morocco*, and the ſtates of *Barbary*. They travel to this, and other parts of *Africa* more remote (for they viſit *Angola*), apparently from motives of trade; and yet I could not diſcover that they purſued any branch of it, that was of importance enough to be an object: they buy hides, and ſkins, which they tan and work into horſe furniture, tobacco pouches, and other uſeful articles; and carry ſome ſmall bales of ſkins back with them: whatever be the real motives of their journey, they behave with propriety, and are courteouſly received, and much reſpected wherever they come: they profeſs the Mahometan religion; and when their long lent of *Ramadan* is over, the king annually kills an elephant to feaſt them.*

* Theſe *Mullahs*, are noticed by Snelgrave, who on his viſit

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Soon after I was ſeated, the muſic, which, beſides trumpets, flutes, and bells, conſiſted

viſit at the camp of the former king of *Dahomy*, (*Guadja Trudo*) obſerved two of them, and was informed that they belonged to a far inland nation bordering on the Moors, and together with thirty eight others of their countrymen had been taken priſoners at different times, whilſt they were trading from one country to another. They were in fact itinerant Arabs, poſſibly mongrels, expert in writing *Arabic*, and in the art of dyeing with a variety of colors, goat and ſheep ſkins, which they manufactured into cartouch-boxes, bags for holding gunpowder and other uſes. By theſe valuable talents they had ſo far attracted the admiration and eſteem of their conqueror, that he treated them with extraordinary marks of favor. The title of *Mullahs* or *Mollahs*, which properly belongs to an order of Mahometan prieſts, whoſe office it is to ſuperviſe and controul the *Cadis*, may poſſibly be aſſumed to give themſelves a greater air of dignity; and it is not improbable, but that under the unſuſpected appearance of traders, they may be ſecretly employed as miſſionaries, to make known and ſpread the doctrines of the *Koran* among theſe interior black nations. If the negroes ſhould ever be diſpoſed to lay aſide their own hereditary ſuperſtitions, it is hardly a doubt but they will embrace Mahometiſm in preference to any other religious ſyſtem, becauſe it allows polygamy, flatters their prejudices in many other reſpects, and will induce a conformity of faith and manners with their northern

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fifted principally of a multitude of drums of various ſizes, began to play, and a numerous crowd danced to this rough harmony. When one band was tired, they were relieved by another, and theſe by two more: after ſome time, a table was laid with abundance of good victuals, and I dined, as did alſo the *Mallays* at another. *Adaunzou* the king's eldeſt ſon and heir apparent, who knew me on former viſits here, ſquatted down behind my chair; and condeſcended to receive a roaſted fowl and ſome other things, which I handed to him from my table; but the king never eats in public; it is even criminal to ſuppoſe he ever eats, or that he is ſo much like other mortals as to want the refreſhment of ſleep. When the repaſt was over, the muſic was renewed, and the king advanced into the parade, followed by a guard of twenty-four women armed

thern and north-eaſtern neighbours. But as yet, they do not ſeem, in general, inclined to adopt a change. The remnant of the *Whydahs* who had eſcaped the edge of *Guadja Trudo*'s ſword, were abundantly thankful to him, for permitting them to continue in the enjoyment of their *ſnake-worſhip*.

each

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each with a blunderbuſs, where he danced ſome time, to convince his ſubjects of his health and activity, to their inexpreſſible joy and ſatisfaction; which they manifeſted in the loudeſt acclamations. He then teſtified his approbation of the performance of his muſicians, by rewarding them with eighty *ounces* * of cowries, which were brought in by three hundred and twenty of his wives, each carrying a *cabeſs*, or four thouſand of them in a braſs pan, which they diſtributed to the drummers, who departed, highly ſatisfied; and I alſo took my leave and withdrew.

February 8. On my arrival this morning at *Gringomy* houſe, I found a vaſt concourſe of people aſſembled. I was received by *Maybou*, who conducted me into a ſpacious parade; on each ſide of the entrance, were three human heads that had been cut off the night before; and in the centre was erected a lofty tent, ſhaped like a ſugar loaf, about fifty feet high and forty feet wide; it was open below, and reſted on a circular

* An ounce is about forty-five pounds.

range

range of ſmall iron rails, through which the king could have a view of what paſſed in the parade. He ſoon made his appearance, and ſeated himſelf (amidſt the ſhouts and acclamations of the people) under his tent, on an elegant armed chair, covered with crimſon velvet, and ornamented with carving and gilding. I was placed under the ſhade of a large umbrella, the *Mallays* on my right, and about thirty eunuchs, with each a bright iron rod in their hands, and dreſſed like women, on my left hand: after the muſic had played about half an hour, with the confuſed noiſe of which, and the ſhouts and ſongs of the multitude, I was almoſt ſtunned: a droll Harlequin entertained the king with an odd ſort of dance, and fired occaſionally a blunderbuſs with five barrels, which gave the king ſo much ſatisfaction, that he ſent him five *cabeſs* of *cowries*.

The proceſſion then began with a guard of an hundred and twenty men, carrying blunderbuſſes, who marched out two abreaſt: next, fifteen of the king's daughters, fine comely women in the bloom of life, attended

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tended by fifty female ſlaves: after them marched in regular order, one by one, ſeven hundred and thirty of his wives, bearing proviſions and liquors for an entertainment in the market place: theſe were followed by a guard of ninety women under arms, with drums beating. A table was then laid, and I breakfaſted, whilſt the proceſſion continued: ſix troops advanced, of ſeventy women each; a diſtinguiſhed favorite walked under an umbrella at the head of each. She who led the van was ſo univerſally reſpected, as to be too ſacred to be ſeen; in fact, they ſecured her effectually from my ſight with the umbrella, and certain long targets of leather, covered with red and blue taffata, with which they encompaſſed her: in the laſt troop were two umbrellas, and four favorites, very fine women, who were ſaid to be in higher eſteem with the king than any, except the lady before mentioned. All theſe entertained the king with their ſongs and dances as they paſſed; and the favorites went into the tent to pay their reſpects, and received conſiderable preſents of *cowries* from him. They were ſucceeded by ten bands of his

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his younger children, fifteen in each, from about ſeven to fifteen years old, each band conſiſting of thoſe that were nearly of the ſame age and ſize. Seven troops of fifty women each followed next, each troop preceded by two Engliſh flags: theſe, like the former, amuſed his Majeſty with their ſongs and droll dances: four of them particularly engaged my attention: their dreſs was too extravagant to be deſcribed; and each had a long tail fixed to her rump, which ſeemed to be a ſlip of leopard's ſkin, ſewed up and ſtuffed; which, by a dexterous wriggle of their hips they whirled round with ſurpriſing velocity, like a ſling. Theſe likewiſe had a ſhare of their maſter's bounty, and marched off loaden with *cowries*. Beſides theſe, there were fifty or ſixty women employed about his perſon, going on meſſages, and diſtributing preſents, which he dealt about him with a liberal hand.

When the women had marched out, the eunuchs began their ſongs in the king's praiſe; enumerating his titles, and proclaiming his grandeur and actions, in terms of the moſt fulſome adulation: which continued until the

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the women had made the neceſſary prepara-tions for him in the market place: then the king retired, and the proceſſion began in the following order. Firſt, two coaches drawn by twelve men each; next, the ſedan chair; and then three hammocs ſcreened from the ſun by large ſumptuous umbrellas of gold and ſilver tiſſue, and covered with canopies of the ſame. Each of theſe was ſurrounded by a very ſtrong guard; and the king was in one of them, but whether in coach, chair, or hammoc, would have been preſumptuous, even criminal, for any of the attendants to venture to gueſs. My hammoc followed, and then five other hammocs, belonging to the great officers of the ſtate, accompanied by an immenſe crowd of attendants and ſpectators. We proceeded through *Ajawhee* market, directly under five gibbets, with a man hanging to each, as deſcribed before, who had been murdered in the preceding night for that purpoſe. We then entered a large parade, incloſed with different kinds of cloth, extended on rails, to keep off the populace; adjoining one end of it was a higher incloſure of finer cloth for the king.

None

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None came into the large parade but *Tamegah*, *Maybou*, *Eubigah*, *Agaow*, and *Jabou*, and their attendants, except myſelf, and ſervants; and here I ſat down to a dinner which would have ſerved an hundred more. After I had dined, *Tamegah*, &c. attacked the remainder; and the crowd without were ſo well ſupplied with victuals, and brandy, that every one of them was fully ſatisfied: in the evening I had permiſſion to viſit the king, and having paſſed half an hour with him, returned to my quarters ſufficiently tired with the noiſe and fatigue of the day. On my way I paſſed by the place where I had ſeen the ſeven men and the like number of horſes tyed two days before: they were now gone, and I was told were murdered on the preceding night; but that thoſe upon the gibbets, and the heads in the king's houſe, were none of them.

Nothing material occurred on the three enſuing days, which I employed in purchaſing ſome ſlaves and ivory; but on the 12th I was ſummoned again to court, to attend another feſtival: only four human heads were placed at the king's door upon this occaſion. The dances and the proceſſion were nearly

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nearly the ſame as before, except that the dreſſes and ornaments of the women were much more ſhowy: the variety, and abundance of rich ſilks, ſilver bracelets, and other ornaments, coral, and a profuſion of other valuable beads, exceeded my expectation; beſides, there was added another troop of forty women, with ſilver helmets, and there was a diſplay of the king's furniture and trinkets, moſt of the women carrying ſomething or other of his; ſome of them fine ſwords; others ſilver-mounted guns; above a hundred of them held either gold, or ſilver-headed canes, in their hands; and that none might be unprovided, ſome carried a candleſtick, and others a lamp, perhaps fifty at leaſt of each, with many other articles; which were all held up for the gaping multitude to admire. We dined, as before, in the market place; and in the evening, when I went to wait on the king, a female dwarf was introduced to dance before him, in which ſhe acquitted herſelf very well: ſhe ſeemed to be about thirty years old, and meaſured only two feet ſeven inches high, was without any deformity, and tolerably well ſhaped.

During

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During this day's amuſements, we were viſited by an *Harmattan* wind, which if deſcribed ſcientifically, would furniſh a curious chapter in the hiſtory of winds: leaving that taſk to thoſe who are more equal to it, I ſhall only endeavor to give ſome idea of its moſt ſtriking *phænomena*.

On that part of the coaſt of Africa which extends from *Cape Verd* to *Cape Lopez*, there are, in the months of December, January, and February, frequent returns of a wind, from the north eaſt, which is known by the name of the *Harmattan* wind. It, probably, may be felt further to the ſouthward than *Cape Lopez*, but I cannot ſpeak of what occurs in countries which I have not viſited. It comes on indiſcriminately at any hour of the day or night; at any time of the tide; or at any period of the moon's age; and continues a day or two; ſometimes, five or ſix; once I knew it to continue a fortnight; and there are generally three or four returns of it every ſeaſon. It never rains in an *Harmattan*; but it ſometimes immediately ſucceeds a ſhower. It blows with moderate force; not quite ſo ſtrong as the ſea breeze

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which in the fair or dry ſeaſon ſets from the weſt, weſt-ſouth-weſt, and ſouth-weſt; but ſomething ſtronger than the land wind which blows at night from the north, and north-north-weſt.

This wind is always accompanied with an unuſual gloomineſs, and hazineſs of the atmoſphere; very few ſtars can be ſeen through the fog; and the ſun, concealed the greateſt part of the day, appears only for a few hours about noon, and then of a mild red, exciting no painful ſenſation in the eye. No dew is perceived during the continuance of this wind; nor is there the leaſt appearance of any moiſture in the atmoſphere. *Salt of Tartar*, diſſolved in water, ſo as to run upon a tile, and expoſed to the *Harmattan*, even in the night, becomes perfectly dry again in a few hours. Vegetables, of every kind, ſuffer conſiderably from it: all tender plants, and ſeeds juſt ſprouting above the earth, are killed by it: the moſt flouriſhing ever-greens feel its baneful influence; the branches of the lemon, orange, and lime trees droop; the leaves become flaccid, and wither; and their fruits, robbed of their

uſual

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uſual nouriſhment, are cramped in their growth, and ripen, or rather appear yellow, and become dry, before they have arrived at half their uſual ſize. Every thing appears dull and faded: the graſs withers, and dries like hay; of which circumſtance the natives avail themſelves, to burn it down in the vicinity of the roads; as well to keep them open, as to deſtroy the ſhelter which it affords to wild beaſts, or even to enemies that might lurk concealed in it. The covers of books, ſhut up cloſely in a trunk, and protected by lying among clothes, bend back as if they had been expoſed to a fire; the pannels of doors, window ſhutters, &c. ſplit; and the joints of a well-laid floor, of ſeaſoned wood, will gape ſo wide, that one may lay his finger in them: the ſides, and decks of ſhips, become quite open and leaky; and veneered work flies to pieces, from the contraction of the wood in different directions. If caſks containing liquor, as wine, or ſpirits, are not frequently wetted on the outſide, they generally loſe their contents.

The air becomes conſiderably cooler in an *Harmattan*; and the thermometer (*Farenheit's*)

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heit's) is generally ten or twelve degrees below the common ſtandard. The *natives* complain much of the ſeverity of the weather on theſe occaſions, and clothe themſelves in their warmeſt apparel, to guard againſt it; though that alteration is highly grateful to the *Europeans* reſident in the country, yet *they* alſo feel many inconveniencies, in common with the *Blacks:* for the eyes, noſtrils, lips and palate become diſagreeably dry and uneaſy: there is a neceſſity and inclination to drink often; not ſo much to quench thirſt, as to remove a painful aridity in the fauces: the lips and noſe become chapped and ſore; and though the air is cool, there is a diſagreeable ſenſation of prickling heat upon the ſkin, as if it had been waſhed with ſpirits of hartſhorn or ſtrong lye. If this wind continues five or ſix days, the ſcarf ſkin generally peels off from the hands and face, and even from the reſt of the body, if the *Harmattan* continues a few days longer. Perſpiration is conſiderably ſuppreſſed; but when ſweat is excited by exerciſe, I have found it peculiarly aerid; taſting like ſpirits of wine diluted with water.

So

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So far its effects on the animal and vegetable world are very diſagreeable, but it is alſo productive of ſome good. The ſtate of the air is extremely conducive to health: it contributes ſurpriſingly to the cure of old ulcers and cutaneous eruptions: perſons labouring under fluxes and intermitting fevers, generally recover in an *Harmattan*; and they who have been weakened and relaxed by fevers, and ſinking under evacuations for the cure of them, particularly bleeding, (which is often injudiciouſly repeated) have their lives ſaved, in ſpite of the doctor. It ſtops the progreſs of epidemic diſeaſes: the ſmall pox, fluxes, and remittent fevers not only diſappear, but they who are labouring under theſe diſorders when an *Harmattan* comes on, are almoſt ſure of a ſpeedy recovery. Infection is not then eaſily communicated. In the year 1770, I had above three hundred ſlaves on board a ſhip in *Whydah* Road, when the ſmall pox appeared among them; the greater part of theſe were inoculated, before an *Harmattan* came on; and about ſeventy of them underwent that operation a few days after it ſet in: the former got very well

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through the diſorder: none of the latter had either any ſickneſs or eruption: we thought we had got clear of the diſorder, but in a very few weeks it began to appear among theſe ſeventy: about fifty of them were inoculated the *ſecond* time; the others had it in the natural way: an *Harmattan* came on, and they *all* recovered, exeept one girl, who had a malignant ulcer on the inoculated ſpot, and died ſometime afterwards of a locked jaw. Theſe ſalutary effects may probably be not univerſal, eſpecially where the *Harmattan* may come laden with the noiſome effluvia of a putrid ſwamp, which is not the caſe in *this* part of the country.

I am ſorry to be obliged to diſſent from ſuch reſpectable authority as that of Dr. *Lind*, to whoſe labors we are ſo much indebted, for his valuable directions for preſerving the health of ſeamen. I preſume, his account of the *Harmattan* is derived from information, and not from his own obſervations, which are univerſally ſo juſt: had he experienced it in perſon, he could not have called it "fatal and malignant;" and that "its "noxious vapour was deſtructive to *Blacks*

"as

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" as well as *Whites*," or that " the mortality " which it occaſioned was in proportion to " the denſity and duration of the fog." He ſeems to confound the *ſalubrity* of the *Harmattan*, with thoſe baneful effects to the conſtitution that follow the commencement of the *periodical rains* in April and May.

Theſe rains are uſhered in by hard guſts of wind, from the north eaſt, and eaſt-north-eaſt, called *Tornadoes* (from a corruption of the Portugueſe word *Trovoada*, a thunder-ſtorm) which occur uſually on the full and change of the moon, about the latter end of March, and in the months before mentioned: they are accompanied by ſevere thunder and lightning, and a very heavy ſhower of two or three hours continuance, which ſoftens the ſurface of the earth, that had been parched up by the preceding *Harmattans*, and a ſucceſſion of ſix or eight months dry weather in that burning climate, and gives an opportunity for the collected, ſtagnating and putrid vapors, confined under its arid ſurface, to riſe and eſcape: theſe, volatilized by the ſolar heat, which beams forth with redoubled heat when the *Tornado* is

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over, ſtrike the noſtrils with the moſt offenſive ſtench imaginable, and occaſion many bilious vomitings, fluxes, remittent and putrid fevers of the worſt kind. Beſides theſe, which are *annual*, there ſeems to be a collection of peſtiferous vapor, which remains impriſoned for a longer period, and does not emerge above the ſurface oftner than once in five, ſix or ſeven years. The periods which I recollect to have been moſt fatal were in 1755 or 1756, when Governor *Melville* and moſt of the gentlemen and garriſon of *Cape Coaſt* died; and in 1763 and 1769 *. The mortality in *ſome* of theſe years (for they were not all equally fatal to the *European* ſettlers) was ſo great, that, as Dr. *Lind* ſays, "The living were ſcarce ſufficient to re-"move, and bury the dead."

The *fog* which accompanies the *Harmattan* is occaſioned by an infinite number of ſmall particles floating in the air: they are ſo minute as to eſcape the touch, and elude every inveſtigation that I could deviſe: I could not ſucceed in attempting to examine them

* The year 1775 was alſo fatal to many.

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by the microſcope, though a part of them are depoſited upon the graſs, leaves of trees, and even upon the ſkin of the Negroes, and make them appear whitiſh, or rather greyiſh. Theſe particles do not fly far over the ſurface of the ſea: the fog is not ſo thick on board the ſhips in *Whydah* Road, at two or three miles diſtance from the ſhore, as it is on the *Beach*; and in proportion to the diſtance from the ſhore, the fog decreaſes: at four or five leagues diſtance from it the fog is entirely loſt, though the wind is felt ten or twelve leagues off.

Upon a careful inquiry concerning the face of the country, I learn, that except a few rivers, and ſome ſwamps and lakes of no conſiderable extent, the country behind *Whydah*, for four hundred miles back, is covered with verdure, open plains of graſs, with ſome clumps of trees, and ſome woods or foreſts. It riſes with a gentle and gradual aſcent, for about an hundred and fifty miles from the ſea, before there is the appearance of a hill; and behind thoſe hills I do not hear of any remarkable ranges of mountains. The ſurface is generally a looſe ſandy ſoil,

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ſoil; below that a rich reddiſh earth, and not a ſtone to be found in it of the ſize of a walnut. I hear of no barren tracks of arid ſand from whence thoſe particles are likely to be detached by the *Harmattan*. Dr. *Lind* writes, that "The *Harmattan* is ſaid to ariſe from "the conflux of ſeveral rivers about *Benin*:" but here, at *Abomey*, I felt it blowing from the north-eaſt, ſtronger than I uſually have elſewhere, and *Benin* bore from me, ſouth-eaſt; therefore the *Harmattan* was not likely to originate there. On the *Gold Coaſt*, it generally blows from the ſouth-eaſt; at the *Iſles de Los*, a little to the northward of *Sierra Leone*, from the eaſt-ſouth-eaſt; and at the river *Gabon* near *Cape Lopez*, from the north-north-eaſt. The interſection of theſe points, or (what I would prefer) an *eaſt* line drawn from *Cape Verd*, cut by a north-eaſt one from the centre of the *Gold Coaſt*; and a north line from *Cape Lopez*, would, I think, point out a probable ſource for this extraordinary wind: but this is mere conjecture of my own.

As the buſineſs which brought me to *Abomey*, and reſpected abuſes practiſed by the carriers of goods, who in bringing them from

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from the *beach* to the factories in *Griwhee*, pilfered conſiderable quantities of them, was in ſome meaſure effected, by the king's promiſing that he ſhould take proper meaſures to prevent the like in future, I was now deſirous to return; and acquainting the king with my intention to do ſo, as ſoon as the *Harmattan* ſhould ceaſe, took my leave of him. It continued blowing freſh for two days longer, which detained me, as the weather was too diſagreeable for travelling. In the *interim*, a part of *Dahomy* houſe took fire, which greatly endangered the whole of it. As ſoon as the hurry occaſioned by it was over, I was induced to wait again upon the king on this occaſion, as a mark of reſpect. I obſerved, as I expected, much confuſion and diſorder in the houſe; ſeveral heads had been cut off, and lay ſcattered about to the number of *twenty* at leaſt; and I found the king much irritated againſt his women; who were accuſing each other of careleſſneſs, and each endeavouring to remove the blame of it from herſelf. It probably was not eaſy to aſcertain how the accident happened: and the king finding the inveſtigation difficult, and his

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his diſpleaſure being perhaps ſomewhat appeaſed by the lives which he had taken away in the firſt impulſe of his anger, he ſettled the buſineſs, by ſelecting *nineteen* of them whoſe reſidence was in the quarter where the fire broke out, and ſold them to me for ſlaves. On the third day, the *Harmattan* ceaſed, and I prepared for my departure; previous to which, the king ſent me a fat ſheep, an anchor of brandy, and five *cabeſs* of *cowries*, towards defraying my expences on the road; and a preſent alſo, of a fine ſtriped cotton cloth, and a handſome female ſlave.

I ſhould have ſet off on my return to *Whydah* early in the morning of the 16th of February, which was the laſt day of the *Annual Cuſtoms*, on which the king diſtributes a profuſion of preſents among his people; but I was prevailed upon to remain till evening, at the requeſt of my attendants, who hoped to pick up ſomething in the ſcramble of the day. On this occaſion, a large ſtage is erected near one of the palace gates, adorned with flags and umbrellas, and ſurrounded with a fence of thorns, to keep off the rabble; on this

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this are piled heaps of ſileſias, checks, callicoes, and a variety of other European and Indian goods; a great many fine cotton cloths that are manufactured in the *Eyo* country; and a prodigious quantity of *cowries*. When all is ready, the king comes upon the ſtage, accompanied by any of the governors, or captains of ſhips, that may be there, and attended by *Tamegah*, *Mayhou*, and a few others of his head men; to each of theſe he gives, according to their rank, the choice of an *Eyo* cloth, and a ſtring of coral beads; his ſubordinate officers are then called over from among the crowd below, and receive each a piece of cloth, and ſome *cowries*, as a mark of their maſter's approbation and regard. The king then throws a bunch of *cowries* with his own hands among the crowd; on which, his women begin to fling the remainder of the goods indiſcriminately among the multitude; in which the white men, if they pleaſe, and *Tamegah* and his companions aſſiſt; and finally, as ſome *cruelty* muſt accompany all their exhibitions, a man tied neck and heels, an alligator muzzled, and a couple of pigeons, with their wings

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wings clipped, are thrown off the ſtage among the crowd, where a confuſion, greater if poſſible than what has preceded, enſues, in ſcrambling for the heads of each, to the great amuſement of the king; and whoever are lucky enough to carry off the prizes, which conſiſt of the heads of the victims, are each rewarded with a handſome preſent. This is the laſt human ſacrifice at the *Cuſtoms*, and is a part of the ceremony which the *Whites* never ſtay to ſee performed; but, if report may be credited, the carcaſe of the human victim is almoſt wholly devoured, as all the mob below will have a taſte of it.

I reached *Agrimee*, on the borders of the wood, that night; and, after a few hours reſt, roſe before day to get through this fatiguing part of the journey before the heat of the morning, and did not halt until I got to my old friend *Jabrakou* at *Whybow*; with whom I ſpent that day, and a great part of the next: but could not ſtay to accompany him on a great buffalo hunt, for which he was preparing. I arrived at *Ardra* on the evening of the 17th of February, where an occurrence happened that might have terminated worſe for

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for us than it did. I had my hammoc ſlung in the white men's apartment, adjoining *Mayhou*'s houſe; and the weather being very warm, the hammoc men, porters, &c. choſe to ſpread their mats, and lie in the piazza, and in the little court before it, in the open air: when we were all aſleep, except the captain of the gang, who after taking a nap was regaling himſelf with a pipe, a leopard leaped over the wall, walked over thoſe who were ſleeping in the court, and, without hurting them, ſeized upon the fat ſheep which the king had given me, that was tyed in a corner of the yard; and carried it off with him in an inſtant, over a wall eight feet high, before the man who ſaw him had time to get a ſhot at him.

The next day, February 18, 1772, I returned ſafe to my factory; and here my narrative ſhould conclude, but I am tempted to waſte ſome additional pages, in relating a few circumſtances that occurred in my ſubſequent journies to *Dahomy*. I had occaſion to viſit *Abomey* again in December 1773: the king was then infirm, and ſinking under years, as well as diſeaſe: he was confined to his

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his room, but would ſee me; which gave me an opportunity of inſpecting his private apartment. He had a neat detached room for ſleeping in, which was ſeparated from the court, in which it ſtood, by a wall about breaſt high, the top of which was ſtuck full of *human lower-jaw bones*; and the little area within it, was paved with *ſkulls*, which, I underſtood, were thoſe of neighbouring kings, and other perſons of eminence and diſtinction, whom he had taken priſoners in the courſe of his wars; and had been placed there, that he might enjoy the ſavage gratification of trampling on the *heads* of his enemies, when he pleaſed. He did not long ſurvive this interview, but lingered on to the 17th of May 1774, when he died aged about ſeventy years; of which he had reigned about forty; and was ſucceeded by his ſon *Adaúnzou*.

A horrid ſcene commences in the palace, the moment the king expires; which continues until *Tamegah* and *Mayhou* have announced that event to his ſucceſſor, and till he takes poſſeſſion of it: this he loſes no time in doing, that he may put an end to the miſchief

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chief going on there. The wives of the deceased begin, with breaking and destroying the furniture of the house, the gold and silver ornaments and utensils, the coral, and in short, every thing of value that belonged either to themselves, or to the late king, and then *murder one another*, *

K *Adanzou*,

* *Bosman*, an author of established credit, speaking of the customs at *Whydah*, prior to its conquest, relates, that "upon the death of the king of that country, and as soon "as it was publicly known, every person fell to stealing as "much as he could of his neighbour's goods, without be-"ing liable to any punishment. This scene of rapine and "confusion continued till a *new king* was confirmed on the "throne; who, by public proclamation, forbad it, and "was instantly, and strictly obeyed." He adds, "that "the succession to the crown seemed to depend on the great "officers, and their adherents; so that the younger brother "was frequently elevated to that rank, in exclusion of the "eldest." The temporary anarchy and tumult usual in these countries whenever the throne became vacant by the death of the sovereign, may possibly have originated (as I have already hinted in a preceding note) in a design either to accelerate the choice of a successor, in order by that means to prevent a civil war; or, to confirm the popular attachment to a *monarchical* form of government, by disgusting them with the turbulence and licentiousness incident to a *democracy*. But this is merely matter of conjecture;

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Adaunzou, upon being nominated king, haſtened with his retinue to the palace gate, which he broke down, and taking poſſeſſion of it, put a ſtop to the carnage; but, before he could accompliſh this, a great part of the furniture, &c. was deſtroyed, and *two hundred and eighty five* of the women had been murdered. The ſedan chair, however, remained entire, and *Ahadee* was interred in it, accompanied, it is ſaid, by *ſix* of his wives, who were buried alive with him, as were alſo all thoſe who had been killed in the affray.

The new king inherited his father's propenſity for war, and an opportunity ſoon offered for gratifying this paſſion. In the autumn of 1774, the king of the exiled *Whydahs*, who had fled from their country on the *Dahoman* conqueſt, died. Theſe people occupy a ſmall, ſwampy territory, between *Whydah* and *Popoe*; and live in amity with the latter, who aſſiſt them in their incurſions and depredations on the former. The *Dahomans*

ture; and, after all, might be no more, than would probably happen, upon ſetting any other ſlaves looſe for a while from the awe of a controuling and deſpotic power, and during its ſuſpenſion.

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never fail to take ſome advantage of any diſſentions that happen among theſe people; and one now occurred on the death of their king; for there were two competitors for the government: *Abavou* (or the *Swamp-Dog*), who was ſon to him who killed his own brother at *Xavier*, and ate his heart, as related in *Ahadee's Memoirs*; and another, who was equally related to the deceaſed, named *Eyee* (or the *Monkey*). The former had the moſt numerous adherents, and drove his rival out of the country; *Adaunzou* determined to ſupport his pretenſions, without being at the trouble of inquiring into the merits of them, and ſent an army to his aſſiſtance. *Abavou*, and his party, were obliged to fly in their turn. The *Dahomans* drove them off the main land in the firſt campaign, and compelled them to take refuge on an iſland called *Foudou-Cong*, or *Feteeſh-Iſland*, which is in a lagoon, or broad expanſe of water, formed by a river in that country. There they remained inacceſſible during the periodical rains, becauſe the *Dahomans* had no canoes, and indeed know nothing of the management of them: but as ſoon as the waters ſubſided,

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they began an arduous undertaking; the army was reinforced with a prodigious number of men; they cut down the trees on each side of the lagoon, of which they made piles, and carried on a bridge, or cauſeway, on both sides, directly to the iſland; and after a bloody conflict, in which many lives were loſt, they carried it.

Abavou and his party retreated upon the lagoon in about eight hundred canoes, which they had with them; but their eſcape was prevented by the *Dahomans* having previouſly piled the river acroſs, a few miles below, where it was narrow, and by keeping poſſeſſion of both ſhores. The *Whydahs* remained in this diſtreſſing ſituation for ſome months, without any other ſubſiſtence than what they derived from the fiſh in the river; or by landing occaſionally in force, and beating up ſome of the *Dahomans* in their quarters, where the aſſailants ſometimes found a ſmall ſupply of proviſions.

At laſt, *Abavou*, ſeeing his people worn out with famine and fatigue, and no proſpect of extricating them from their difficulties, reſolved to ſurrender himſelf. He thanked his followers

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followers for their ſervices, and told them, that the only return he could now make for their attachment and fidelity, was to deliver himſelf up, and endeavour to prevail on *Adaunzou* to accept *his* life, as a peace-offering for their ſafety: with this determination he came on ſhore, and was ſent by *Agaow* (the *Dahoman* general) to the king, who ordered his head to be cut off. His adherents ſubmitted priſoners at diſcretion, to be diſpoſed of as the king pleaſed.

Although this tranſaction paſſed within a few miles of *Whydah*, and we could not fail of knowing every ſtage of it, for in fact there was nothing elſe to attend to (as *trade is entirely ſuſpended whilſt the country is at war*) yet *Adaunzou*, to gratify his own vanity, ſent his *half-heads* to announce his victory to the governors of the forts there, and ſignified his wiſh, that they ſhould teſtify their joy at the event, which was complied with, by firing a royal ſalute at each of the forts, and by every ſhip in the road.

Soon after this, he thought fit to ſend a meſſenger to acquaint me, that he wiſhed to ſee me, and I waited on him towards the end

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of December 1775. At our firſt interview, he aſked me if I had ever ſeen *Abavou?* on replying that I had not, he added, "Then "you ſhall now." I knew *Abavou* had been dead a month at leaſt, and had no curioſity to ſee his remains; but did not think it adviſeable to oppoſe the king's intention. Some women, to whom he gave directions about it, ſoon returned from an inner apartment of the palace, carrying a wide, ſhallow, braſs veſſel, that contained a large bundle, much bigger than a bee-hive, which was ornamented with two ſmall ſilk flags, each about the ſize of a handkerchief. This bundle was compoſed of various folds of cloth, the uppermoſt of cotton; within them were ſeveral ſilk wrappers, which being removed, *Abavou*'s head made its appearance, lying in a china baſon. It was in perfect preſervation, as dry as an *Egyptian* mummy, and the hair ſmartly dreſſed. "*That is the fellow,*" ſaid the king, "who gave me ſo much trouble." I replied, You ſeem to take good care of him, now you have him. "Yes," ſaid he, "I am a warrior "myſelf, and if I ſhould fall into the enemies "hands,

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"hands, could wiſh to be treated with that "*decency*, of which I ſet the example."

He ordered a great number of the priſoners, who had ſurrendered on the late occaſion, to be ſhewn to me. I declined purchaſing any of them, as they were much emaciated, and appeared to be ſickly. "Since "that is the caſe," ſaid he, "I ſhall put them "to death." I endeavored to diſſuade him from that reſolution, and recommended that he would make them *boilers of ſalt*, as they came from the country which ſupplied him with that article; or to employ them in ſome other way. He ſaid, "it would be ſetting a "*bad example*, and keeping people in the "country, who might hold ſeditious lan-"guage: that *his* was a peculiar government, "and that theſe ſtrangers might prejudice "his people againſt it, and infect them with "ſentiments incompatible with it." I really cannot ſay what was at laſt the fate of theſe poor people: I know they were *not* kept for *ſalt boilers*, and doubt not ſome of them were purchaſed afterwards (when their health and ſtrength were recruited), for ſlaves for the *Weſt Indies*; but thoſe who did not find

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purchaſers would undoubtedly be put to death: and the *Annual Cuſtoms*, which were then at hand, would produce a demand for two or three hundred of them; to "water "with their blood the graves of *Adaunzou*'s "anceſtors."

APPENDIX.

I SHALL beg leave to add, by way of ſupplement, a few particulars, which have ſome connection with the preceding harratives. It has been ſeen, that the *Daboman* conqueſts have extended chiefly over the maritime ſtates—a circumſtance, which might appear ſingular, if we were only to regard the comparative civilization of thoſe ſtates, in conſequence of their intercourſe with Europeans, and the ready ſupply of fire arms and ammunition to be obtained from that

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that commerce, for their defence: but the truth ſeems to have been, that in proportion as theſe ſtates became improved in civilization, and addicted to agriculture and trade, they declined from their ancient ferocity of temper: they had grown voluptuous and effeminate, and loſt every ſpark of martial fire. The kingdom of *Whydah*, though capable of muſtering with eaſe two hundred thouſand effective militia, employed none but mercenary ſoldiers for its protection. On the other hand, the interior nations continuing unaltered in their manners, were not to be ſubdued by the *Dahoman* armies. The borderers on this kingdom are the *Eyos* or *Eyoes* on the eaſtern ſide, between *Dahomy* and *Benin*; the *Mahees*, on the weſtern; and the *Toppas*, whoſe country lies contiguous to the *Eyos*. The latter are a very ſpirited nation, and firſt gave a check to the ambition of *Guadja Trudo*. They are probably the *Yahoos* of Snelgrave, who perhaps had borrowed this name from *Swift*'s Gulliver, which was cotemporary with his publication. Their form of government is not very different from that of *Dahomy*, from which

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which their deſpot, until very lately, exacted a yearly tribute for many years, as the price of peace. They cultivate cotton, and a ſpecies of graſs, and manufacture both into clothing, for the uſe of the natives. Their traders likewiſe deal largely in ſlaves, which are diſpoſed of to the factors of *Dahomy*. The *Mahees*, as I have before hinted, are a powerful confederacy of many united and independent ſtates; whoſe form of government ſeems to be of the feudal kind. Their leading men poſſeſs vaſſals or ſlaves, but do not treat them with the *Dahoman* aſperity. Nevertheleſs, they ſell ſlaves in conſiderable numbers to the *Dahoman* factors. But revolutions happen ſo frequently, and from ſuch trivial cauſes, among theſe barbarous nations, who have not yet diſcovered the means of conſtituting, by regular offenſive and defenſive treaties, a political balance of power, for their mutual preſervation and tranquility, that they cannot be ſuppoſed to enjoy any thing like a ſettled form of government: it fluctuates with the alternate ſucceſſes of invaders and uſurpers. The *Eyos* are even now engaged in hoſtilities againſt the

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the *Mahees*, with the uſual fury of ſavages. At the commencement of the laſt periodical rains (in *May* 1788) they had ravaged no leſs than fourteen diſtricts; and, burning and deſtroying multitudes of towns and villages, continued their progreſs with ſuch devaſtation and horror, that the tyrant of *Dahomy* was not without violent apprehenſions for his own ſafety. Of the *Tappas*, but little is known. It is ſuppoſed they are the ſame nation which is mentioned by Snelgrave, by the name of *Tuffos*, a large party of whom having been ſurprized and routed by the forces of *Guadja Trudo*, eighteen hundred captives were brought to the royal encampment, and of this number no leſs than four hundred were inſtantly ſacrificed. The remainder were either kept or ſold as ſlaves. This nation, however, muſt have acquired conſiderable importance, as they drew a regular tribute from the *Eyos*.

The language commonly ſpoken in the *Dahoman* empire is the *Ajirah*, which is the proper dialect of *Ardrah*, whoſe dominions formerly extended from the river *Volta* to *Lagos*. Throughout the ſame tract of country

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try it prevail at this day, though corrupted a little, it is true, with ſome provincial idioms and variations, occaſioned by an intermixture of different people. *Ajirah* was once a large and populous town, before the ſubverſion of the kingdom of *Ardrah* by the *Dahomans* in 1724. It is even at preſent no contemptible place. Its diſtance from *Griwhee* or *Grigue*, (the capital of *Whydah*) is about ſeven hours. I uſed to compute, that the hammoc men carried me at the rate of *at leaſt*, five miles per hour, in general. But that part of the road indeed which lies through the great wood (marked upon the map) is ſo extremely bad, that I am certain my rate of travelling did not exceed four miles per hour, during the five hours I employed in croſſing it. *Whydah*, in its ancient ſtate, and before it became a province to *Dahomy*, was bounded on the weſtern part by *Popo*. It ranged along the ſhore about nine or ten miles; but in its inland diviſion, from ten to twelve miles in breadth (though in ſome parts rather leſs), and contained about ſixty thouſand ſquare acres. So very populous was it, that in one village only, were computed

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computed as many inhabitants as are commonly found in an entire kingdom on the *Gold Coaſt*. There were many of theſe large villages equally well ſtocked, beſides innumerable ſmall ones; moſt of which lay at a very ſmall diſtance from each other. The king aſſured *Boſman* (about the year 1693) that one of his vice-roys, with his ſons and grand-ſons (and not reckoning any of his female deſcendants) made up a body of *two thouſand* perſons, all of whom were then living. This, however marvellous it may found in *our* ears, was not thought at all incredible by thoſe to whom it was mentioned, becauſe the common men in general had from forty to fifty wives each; and their ſuperiors from three to four hundred, and ſome of them even one thouſand: the king himſelf maintained a *haram* of between four and five thouſand. Moſt of theſe women were employed in tilling the ground for their reſpective huſbands. Such among them as could boaſt pre-eminent beauty, which elevated them to the rank of favorites, remained at home, yet were not entirely excuſed from ſervile duties, but waited upon their

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their husbands. Besides agriculture, they were also occupied in spinning cotton, weaving cloths, and brewing *pitto*, a kind of beer (which was the ordinary drink), in dressing victuals for sale, and carrying merchandises to the market *. The men practised, though rudely, the arts of forming domestic utensils with the shells of the *calebash* fruit; *bassagyes* (or javelins), and several other articles. They were the most wealthy and the most enlightened blacks on the slave coast; an improvement chiefly effected by a long habit of intercourse with Europeans of several different nations. *Sabee*, at that period the metropolis of the kingdom, the residence of their monarch, and seat of their commerce, was above four miles in circumference. The houses, constructed with mud walls, were roofed with thatch. The factory houses of the European traders were spacious and airy, distributed into convenient apartments, and surrounded on the outside with a large gallery opening into balconies. The

* The natives assigned as a reason for using an artificial beverage, that the water of their wells was too chilly, to be swallowed without danger.

town

town ſwarmed with people, inſomuch, that it was impoſſible to paſs through the ſtreets without great difficulty. Markets were held every day, at which were expoſed to ſale all ſorts of merchandizes, European and African, beſides abundance of proviſions of every kind. Adjacent to the factories was an extenſive ſpace, adorned with beautiful and lofty trees, which afforded a refreſhing ſhade to the governors, factors, and captains of veſſels belonging to Great-Britain, France, and Portugal. Here they walked every day, and diſcourſed of their affairs. The prodigious number and variety of tall and lovely trees, which ſeemed as if they had been planted on purpoſe for decoration; the drains which interſected the country, and were unincumbered with briars, or noxious plants (ſo unlike what one ſees in other parts of *Guinea*); fields of the livelieſt verdure, entirely devoted to culture, and ſeparated only by a ditch, or a path; the plains embelliſhed with an aſtoniſhing multitude of large and ſmall villages, every one of which was incloſed with a low mud wall, and placed in full view of the ſurrounding diſtrict;—all this

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this aſſemblage united to form the moſt picturesque view imaginable, unobſtructed either by mountain or hill. The country riſing by a gradual, and almoſt imperceptible ſlope, to the diſtance of between forty and fifty miles from the margin of the ſea, there was not a ſpot throughout the whole kingdom, which did not comprehend water within the limits of its proſpect. Such was the landſcape ſketched by *Boſman*, and finiſhed by *Smith*, who perhaps may have heightened its coloring with rather too licentious a fancy; for he had no opportunity of viewing the country with his own eyes, until ſome months after the utter demolition of the town, and deſolation of the entire kingdom, by the barbarians of *Dahomy*. At the time of this voyager's arrival on the coaſt, the elyſium had vaniſhed; the fields lay uncultured, overrun with weeds, and ſtrewed with human ſkeletons; and the very air of the place was impoiſoned with exhalations peſtiferous to the lives of European viſitors. But it is unqueſtionably a very fertile tract of land. The heat of the ſun is almoſt inſupportable by Europeans, yet *Whydah* is at preſent not in

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in all reſpects a diſagreeable reſidence. The ſociety of the gentlemen at the forts, is a pleaſing relief in the hours of relaxation from buſineſs. The market is amply ſupplied; for the country abounds with deer, ſheep, and excellent goats (whoſe fleſh is as tender as mutton), hogs both wild and domeſticated, variety of poultry, and plenty of good fiſh. Some beef is likewiſe attainable occaſionally. * All theſe articles are ſold at reaſonable prices. A turtle weighing one hundred pounds weight, has been purchaſed for a ſingle flaſk of brandy. So that a ſhip's company may be furniſhed here with freſh proviſions in greater abundance, and cheaper than at any other part of the coaſt. Nor is it deſtitute of various productions, adapted to commerce, and manufacture. Among thoſe which in a very imperfect ſurvey of the country have ſtruck the obſervation of European traders, are,

The *Indigo* plant, which is exceedingly

* *Atkins* ſays, that a cow of three hundred pounds weight is reckoned a fine beaſt; and that the ſheep weigh about twelve pounds weight. It is true they are ſmall; but they are juicy and well taſted.

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common; but which the natives have neither ſkill, nor diſpoſition to prepare for a market.

Tobacco grows ſpontaneouſly in ſeveral places: this, no leſs than the former, requires the management of experienced Europeans, to bring it into a ſtate adapted for ſale.

Cotton is not only cultivated, but manufactured into cloth, for the uſe of the natives.

Pepper, of a ſpecies very ſimilar, and indeed ſcarcely diſtinguiſhable in flavor from that of the Eaſt-Indies.

A ſmall *berry* ſerves the natives as a ſubſtitute for ſugar. It is in itſelf inſipid in the mouth, but imparts a certain ſweetneſs to whatever is eaten after it.

Palm Oil is another valuable production, and is exported from hence in large quantities for the uſe of the Britiſh wool-combers and ſoap-boilers.

Peltry, ſuch as tyger and leopard ſkins, &c. are not of much importance. But if we conſider the infinite profuſion of other uſeful products ſcattered over this country by the hand of nature, we are forced to lament the extreme

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extreme indolence of the natives, who remain unconſcious of, or indifferent to, the bleſſings which ſurround them.

The men ſleep, and ſmoke; the women (upon whom the whole taſk of agriculture is enforced) put, once in the year, a little ſeed-corn into the ground: ſuch is the general torpidity which characterizes this people, and which would ſeem to juſtify a common remark, that in Africa, in proportion as the ſoil is fruitful, the inhabitants are averſe to labor.

Whydah, in its ſtate of independence, and proſperity, before the *Dahoman* invaſion, is ſaid * to have exported, pretty regularly, a thouſand ſlaves per month, throughout the year. Its preſent export amounts only to about five thouſand five hundred per annum. Thus, the conqueſt of it, by the king of *Dahomy*, has diminiſhed the traffic in ſlaves; not by the ſubſtitution of one more innocent, but by a carnage, and depopulation, the moſt horrible that ever occurred, perhaps, in the hiſtory of mankind.

* See *Boſman*.

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A SHORT
ACCOUNT
OF THE
AFRICAN SLAVE TRADE.

SECOND EDITION, WITH ADDITIONS.

AS the African Slave Trade has been of late the ſubject of public examination and of private diſcuſſion, a brief account of it may not perhaps be unacceptable to thoſe who have had no opportunity of hearing the evidence that has been given at the bar of both houſes of parliament, or leiſure to peruſe the various publications which the preſent inquiry has occaſioned.

A trade for Negro ſlaves is carried on from the river Senegal in 16 deg. north latitude,

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to Cape Negro, in 16 deg. ſouth: which comprehends a tract of near four thouſand miles of ſea coaſt; and includes the greateſt part of the interior country, within the above limits, from the confines of Mount Atlas, acroſs the immenſe continent of Africa, to Mozambique, on the eaſtern coaſt.

From the nations bordering on the rivers Senegal and Gambia, the emperor of Morocco procures annually recruits for his black cavalry; and his ſubjects are furniſhed from thence with whatever ſlaves they have occaſion for. Caravans alſo travel from thence acroſs the continent, to Upper Egypt, with conſiderable numbers of Negro ſlaves; who are forwarded from thence either from Alexandria, by ſea, or marched through Aſia Minor, to Conſtantinople. From the ſame country, including the diſtricts towards the river Sierra Leon, ſlaves are collected for ſupplying the different ſtates of Barbary; from the ports of which, ſome of theſe ſlaves are ſent to the Morea, and to the Turkiſh iſlands in the Mediterranean: hence it is, that the African coaſt from Senegal to Sierra Leon affords, comparatively, but few ſlaves

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to the European traders. From Mozambique, and the ports on the eaſtern coaſt of Africa, great numbers are ſent to Perſia, Goa, and other parts of the Eaſt Indies; and in proportion as the culture of the Weſt Indian Iſlands, and of the European ſettlements in America, has been extended, a demand for the labour of African Negroes has regularly increaſed there; and now amounts to about eighty thouſand annually: of which the Britiſh purchaſe about forty thouſand; the French, twenty thouſand; the Portugueſe, ten thouſand; the Dutch, ſix thouſand; and the Danes, four thouſand.—Of the forty thouſand purchaſed by the Britiſh, about a twentieth part are calculated to die on the voyage; and three-fourths of thoſe that arrive in the Weſt Indies, are diſpoſed of to the French and Spaniards; the remainder are diſtributed in the Britiſh iſlands, and, for the greater part, continue ſtill in a ſtate of nature. Jamaica will require an addition of five or ſix thouſand ſlaves annually, for many years, to complete its cultivation. This is the caſe alſo, though in a leſs degree, of the iſlands of Grenada, Dominica, St. Vincent,

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and ſome other places; particularly the Bahamas and the Bay of Honduras: the Bahamas are now the retreat of the unfortunate Loyaliſts, who having been baniſhed from the United States, have a virgin ſoil to work upon, which promiſes no ungrateful return, as ſoon as the neceſſary labourers can be procured; and the Bay of Honduras affords an aſylum to thoſe Britiſh ſettlers, who have lately been obliged to abandon their poſſeſſions on the Moſquitto Shore.

When the prodigious demand for African Negroes, which has exiſted for time immemorial in Mauritania, Egypt, Perſia, and the Eaſt, is conſidered; and, in addition to that, the immenſe exportation of late years to America and the Weſt Indies, it might be preſumed, that a viſible decreaſe of inhabitants would be the conſequence of theſe annual drains; but from the concurrent teſtimony of the moſt intelligent perſons, who have viſited that country, it does not appear that this ſpeculation is juſtified by experience.

They who have been both in Africa and America, ſay that they have been ſtruck with

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with the appearance of nearly the ſame population as in the ſtate of Virginia, in thoſe parts of Africa that lie upon the Coaſt; and add, that from the beſt information which they could get, the interior parts are at leaſt as fully inhabited, as thoſe which they had an opportunity of ſeeing. Virginia comprehends about thirty thouſand ſquare miles, and, including the Negroes, is ſaid to contain eight hundred thouſand inhabitants: taking this for the baſis of a calculation, it may reaſonably be preſumed that Negroland, which extends, as was mentioned before, from the Senegal to Cape Negro, and from the Atlantic eaſtward to the Indian Ocean, and contains, excluſive of Nubia and Abiſſinia, at leaſt, four millions of ſquare miles, cannot have leſs than one hundred and ſix millions of inhabitants; which are more than Great Britain, France, Spain, Portugal, Germany, Italy, Holland and Switzerland collectively contain.

A late writer *, who was well acquainted with Africa, from his long reſidence there,

* The late Governor Hippeſly, of Cape Coaſt Caſtle.

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has pointed out the very different circumſtances of Europe and Africa, with regard to the advantages and diſadvantages attending the propagation of the ſpecies in each. What numbers of both ſexes, ſays he, are there in the European world, who grow up and die, without ever having children! The increaſe of luxury has always been an enemy to matrimony; and accordingly, we find many decline it from choice, and many from neceſſity. The vain are deterred from it, from an unwillingneſs to abridge any part of the ſplendor of their appearance; and the indigent, from a certainty of multiplying their neceſſities. The long abſence of men from their wives, on account of trade and other avocations, to ſay nothing of war and its waſteful conſequences, neceſſarily reduces the number of births. A ſtate of ſervitude precludes a ſtate of matrimony, in a great part of the community; for there are few who will keep a married ſervant of either ſex; but above all, religion, in the Roman Catholic countries, ſtrikes the heavieſt blow at propagation. Theſe, and other obſtacles to marriage and population, which exiſt, and

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are likely to continue in Europe, prevent a yearly recruit of at leaſt ſome millions of people; yet under all theſe diſadvantages, the number of its inhabitants are ſuppoſed to increaſe.

In Africa none of theſe impediments prevail: there we find deſire, unchecked by the dread of want, taking its full ſcope. A turn to ſpeculation, retirement and abſtracted ſtudies, reſolutions of celibacy from diſappointed love, unmarried ſervants, long voyages, and religious vows, are utterly unknown. Their wars are not attended with the ſame circumſtances of deſtruction as ours *; and here are no impediments againſt purſuing the dictates of natural inclination. Polygamy is univerſally practiſed in Africa, and contributes greatly to its populouſneſs. It would be hurtful to the population of Europe; where the number of males and females born is nearly equal, or at leaſt differs only about as much as to make up for the number of the former that are cut off, by accident attending their active ſtate: but in Africa,

* Long voyages, tedious impriſonments, ſhipwrecks, bombardments, &c. &c.

where

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where no man goes without a wife from a ſcarcity of women, and in ſhort an unmated black man is ſeldom or never ſeen; where the richeſt men, having many wives, do not prevent the pooreſt from having one or two, the number of women muſt greatly exceed that of the men: nor is this a ſingular caſe, for the ſame happens at Bantam, and other parts of the Eaſt Indies, that lie in the ſame latitudes: beſides the number of men every year ſlaughtered and ſacrificed in Africa, there is a great majority of male ſlaves carried out of it, which ſtill adds very much to the relative proportion of women left behind; ſo that there muſt be an advantage to population in admitting polygamy in a country, where almoſt every man may have two or three wives, and ſeveral, as many hundreds. Hence it is, that Africa can not only continue ſupplying all the demands that offer for her ſurplus inhabitants, in the quantities it has hitherto done, but, if neceſſity required it, could ſpare thouſands, nay millions more, to the end of time, all of whom may be conſidered as reſcued by

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by this means from that certain death, which awaited them in their own country.

The vaſt country of Negroland is divided into a multitude of ſtates, the greateſt part of which have never yet been explored; but in thoſe which have been viſited by Europeans, the government is found to vary from the moſt abſolute tyranny in ſome, to ſomewhat leſs deſpotic and oppreſſive in others. The bulk of the people are ſlaves to a few freemen; and in ſome ſtates there is not an individual free but the prince: from every circumſtance of intelligence and obſervation, the general ſtate of the Negro, in Africa, is that of ſlavery and oppreſſion, in every ſenſe of the word. In *Dahomy*, the king is abſolute maſter of the life, liberty, and property, of every perſon in his dominions; and he ſports with them, with the moſt ſavage and wanton cruelty. Piles of their heads are placed as ornaments before his palace gates on feſtival days, and on every public occaſion; and the floors leading to his aparment are ſtrewed with their bodies, to impreſs thoſe who approach him with reſpect and awe. The area before his bed-

chamber,

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chamber, is paved with the ſkulls of priſoners taken in war, that he may daily enjoy the ſavage gratification of literally trampling on the heads of his enemies. Parents have neither property, nor intereſt in their children, in the *Dahoman* territories; they belong entirely to the king, and are all taken, by his order, from their mothers, at an early age, and diſtributed in villages remote from the place of their nativity; where there is but little chance of their being ſeen, or, at leaſt, recognized by their parents afterwards. His motive for this is, that there may be no family connexions, no aſſociations that might be injurious to his unlimitted power: Each individual is detached, and unconnected; and, having no relative for whom he is intereſted, is ſolicitous only for his own ſafety, which he conſults by the moſt abject ſumiſſion. There, paternal affections, and filial love ſcarcely exiſt: for mothers, inſtead of cheriſhing, endeavour to ſuppreſs thoſe attachments for their offspring, which, they are certain, will be violated, as ſoon as their children are able to undergo the fatigue of being removed from

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from them. Yet, this worſt of ſlavery does not prevent population, as it, doubtleſs, would in any civilized part of the world, where liberty is prized above all other enjoyments. But the idea of ſlavery is different in an African. Had the Negro the love of rational freedom exiſting in his breaſt, it is next to impoſſible that he could act thus. But, alas! he knows nothing of this ineſtimable bleſſing, having never enjoyed it! The country which gave him birth, the ſoil from which he ſprung, produce no ſuch bloſſom; and, ſhould it ever appear, which is highly improbable, inſtead of the foſtering hand to bring it to maturity, the bloody and unrelenting arm of tyranny is ever ready to cut it down.

The credibility of theſe extraordinary facts does not depend upon mere hearſay: *Dahomy* is a maritime kingdom, in which the Britiſh, French, and Portugueſe have been permitted to erect forts for the protection of their trade; and the veracity of what is here related, is authenticated by the indubitable teſtimony of many who have reſided there, and have avowed it publicly.

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The Africans have been in the practice, from time immemorial, of ſelling their countrymen, and never entertained any more doubt of their right to do ſo, than we do of ſending delinquents to Botany Bay, or to Tyburn; deeming it fair and juſt to diſpoſe of their ſlaves, priſoners of war, and felons, according to their own eſtabliſhed laws and cuſtoms. Great enormities they puniſh with death; but, unleſs it be in ſuch deſpotic governments as *Dahomy*, few but criminals are ſold to the Europeans, except priſoners taken in war; who would inevitably be put to death, did not a more profitable mode offer of diſpoſing of them: and hence it is, that perſons of ſome rank in their own country, ſometimes become ſlaves in the Weſt Indies and American colonies; but the houſe of bondage, ſtrictly ſpeaking, may be called a land of freedom to them: where, notwithſtanding they do not enjoy pre-eminence, they may be comfortable; and where, although prevented from exerciſing cruelty on others, they are always protected themſelves. Thoſe who are guilty of theft, adultery, or the imputed crime of witchcraft,

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if they escape death, are sold for slaves. To deter them from the commission of these crimes, their situation in foreign slavery is represented to be attended with the severest tortures; which, fortunately for them however, are not realized. Nor is it to be wondered at, in a country of so great extent, and so little civilization, that the greatest part of the Africans, brought to the European colonies, have been previously condemned to slavery, for acts of delinquency; since Great Britain alone, under the superior advantages of its religion, laws, and manners, produces annually above two thousand convicts.

Since the labour of African slaves has been found necessary for the cultivation of the soil in the tropical climates of America, from the utter incapacity of white people to undergo that fatigue, every European nation possessing colonies there, has been solicitous to acquire a share in this traffic; nor have the most scrupulous of them entertained a doubt of their right to purchase, what the Africans exercised a right to dispose of.

Among the adventurers in this trade, the

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Britiſh poſſeſs, at preſent, the greateſt ſhare. It was during the government of the commonwealth, that Negroes were carried, in any numbers, to the Britiſh Weſt Indies, and then, chiefly to Barbadoes: a few indeed were brought to Virginia, by a Dutch ſhip, as early as 1620; but it was the Royal African Company, that firſt carried on, from England, a vigorous commerce to Africa, during the reign of Charles II. We may form an opinion of the magnitude of it, in its moſt flouriſhing ſtate, prior to the revolution in 1688, by conſidering that the company employed thirty ſhips annually, which delivered about five thouſand Negroes in the Weſt Indies. The increaſe of it to its preſent ſtate, may be attributed to the enterprizing ſpirit of the merchants; to the ſuperior addreſs of thoſe employed in the executive part of it; to the opulence of the manufacturers, which enables them to extend a credit to the former, beyond what can be had in any other country; and to the annual grants of parliament, for the maintenance of ſeveral forts, and factories in Africa. From theſe concurring circumſtances, the Britiſh

planters

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planters are ſupplied with Negroes, on more reaſonable terms than their neighbours; and a large ſurplus is left, which is diſpoſed of to the French and Spaniards for ſpecie, and other valuable commodities.

The importance of this trade to Great Britain may be determined from the following conſiderations: it immediately employs about one hundred ſhips, which ſail annually for Africa, with cargoes which amount nearly to a million ſterling, and which are compoſed of the productions of the Britiſh ſettlements in the Eaſt and Weſt Indies; and of Britiſh manufactures, to the value of ſeven hundred thouſand pounds. The circuitous returns of theſe cargoes are computed at a million and an half. The artificers and mechanics employed at Liverpool alone, receive one hundred thouſand pounds annually for labor and materials employed in equipping the ſhips engaged in it; and excluſive of the large ſums paid for ſeamen's wages, the commiſſions and privilege of the captains and officers amount at leaſt to fifty thouſand pounds annually; which are generally realized there, and have contributed

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greatly to the rapid increaſe of that commercial town.

The African trade, connected as it is with the Weſt Indian commerce, and with the trade to the remaining continental colonies, and Newfoundland fiſhery, is of the utmoſt conſequence to the employment of many thouſands of our fellow ſubjects; to the naval power of Britain; and to the royal revenues; all which are conjoined by ſympathetic ties. The value of three millions at leaſt of domeſtic manufactures, excluſive of other merchandize, annually finds a profitable vent by means of the African and Weſt Indian trades; and above five millions of property, ariſing from the labor of Negro ſlaves, employed in the Weſt Indian iſlands, is yearly imported from thence; which contributes not leſs than a million and an half annually to the revenue of this kingdom. To carry on this immenſe traffic, and to ſupply theſe iſlands with lumber and proviſions, from the continental colonies and Newfoundland fiſhery, gives conſtant employment to at leaſt a thouſand ſhips, and to above fifteen thouſand mariners.

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ners. To enumerate the fatal conſequences that would inevitably enſue from a check given to this extenſive commerce, much more the ſuppreſſion of it, exceeds the preſent limits of this ſhort ſketch, but they ſhall be hinted in the ſequel.

The adventurers in this trade, who have ſeen for near a century paſt, the Society for propagating Chriſtianity, compoſed of the Archbiſhop of Canterbury, the Biſhop of London, and many pious doctors of the eſtabliſhed church, deriving, as maſters, a yearly income from the labor of their Negroe ſlaves in the Weſt Indies, which is appropriated to the increaſe of Chriſtianity in the world, could not conſider it as contrary to the ſpirit of the Scriptures, or to the principles of morality: nor could the adventurers regard this traffic as inconſiſtent with the natural rights of mankind, when they read in the ſtatute of 9 and 10 of King William (which was made avowedly for extending the trade to Africa), "*That this trade was* "*highly beneficial to this kingdom;*" a declaration of a king, who was the patron of liberty, and of a parliament that had vindi-

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cated the natural rights of mankind; and when they read alſo in the ſtat. of 23 Geo. II. "*That the trade to Africa is very advantageous to Great Britain, and* neceſſary *to the plantations.*" Which act was made by a whig king, and a whig parliament; who, when they diſſolved the late African Company, granted a large ſum of money as a compenſation for their rights, in order that a trade thus neceſſary and advantageous, might be carried on with greater energy and ſucceſs.

Encouraged by theſe, and various other acts of parliament, which declared the African trade to be highly beneficial to this nation, many merchants engaged their fortunes in it; nor could they imagine the *purchaſe* of Negroes from thoſe ſtates of Africa (who have the ſame right to diſpoſe of them as the parliament has to inflict the pains of baniſhment or death) or conſider the *ſale* of them as illegal, when they knew that many able lawyers, learned judges, and illuſtrious chancellors had expreſsly declared this purchaſe and ſale to be lawful; and to have transferred to the maſter ſuch a property as could not be affected by local changes, or ſubſequent

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ſubſequent baptiſm; and when the adventurers know alſo, that in conformity to the declarations of theſe judges and lawyers, the ſtatute of the 5th of his late and of the 13th of his preſent Majeſty, ſubjected the Negroes in the Weſt Indian iſlands, as well as the lands which they laboured, to the payment of all debts, owing either to his Majeſty, or to any of his ſubjects; and directed theſe Negroes to be ſold, like any other chattels, for ſatisfaction of ſuch debts. In conſequence of which, the five hundred thouſand Negroes, now belonging to the planters in thoſe iſlands, are pledged by the legiſlature, and by the nation, for payment of the debts that are due, either to the Britiſh merchants or manufacturers, or to the ſubjects of foreign princes; who, by a late act of parliament, have been encouraged and enabled to lend money to theſe planters, on the ſecurity of their lands, and of the labour of their Negroes.

Yet this trade, ſo highly beneficial to the adventurers, and important to the ſtate; a trade ſanctioned by the clergy, ſupported by the judges, and authorized by the laws,

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has lately been condemned both in principle and practice. By the law and uſage of parliament, the moſt trivial right of the moſt inconſiderable ſubject is never taken away, even for the public good itſelf, without a manifeſt neceſſity, and a full compenſation. Yet an attempt has been made, and meaſures are unremittingly purſued, to deprive the Britiſh planters, merchants and manufacturers, of the advantage of this important traffic; and under a pretence of regulation, reſtrictions have already been propoſed, which ſtrike at its exiſtence: but though the liberty of Negroes ſeems now to be the favorite idea, the liberty of Britons to purſue their lawful occupations ſhould not be forgotten: for the principle which has raiſed the commerce and navigation of this country, and with them the landed intereſt and revenues of the kingdom, from inconſiderable beginnings to their preſent greatneſs, is the *right* which every man in it poſſeſſes, to carry on his own buſineſs, in the way moſt advantageous to himſelf and the ſociety, without any ſudden interruption in the purſuit of it; and the *conſciouſneſs* which he

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he has, of the ſteady protection of the laws, in the proſecution of what has been ſhewn to be legal;

At a time when neighbouring nations, our rivals in commerce as well as arms, are laviſhing unprecedented bounties, to extend their African trade, and endeavor to promote it by every poſſible encouragement, an aſſociation has been formed here for the avowed purpoſe of *aboliſhing* it; who ſuffering themſelves to be impoſed upon, by lending too credulous an ear to that kind of information which they ſought with more avidity than juſtice, without duly conſidering by what means, or by or from whom it was procured, have labored to inflame the paſſions, and prejudice the minds of the community, by various publications, containing the moſt groſs miſtatements of facts, and miſrepreſentation of characters. It is an eaſy taſk to draw in glowing colors, that imaginary picture of human woe, which ſhall excite compaſſion, and rouze indignation; and in this ſtyle of painting the ſolicitors for the abolition have almoſt ſucceeded to their wiſhes: by their perſonal aſſiduities, ſubſcriptions

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ſcriptions, and publications; by their circular letters to the mayors of corporations, and addreſſes to grand juries, they have raiſed the torch of civil conteſt in the realm, which may eventually ſpread the flame of reſiſtance throughout the colonies. Their clamors have reached the legiſlature; and they who are concerned in the trade, have been called upon to defend their rights and injured reputation, at the bar of both houſes of parliament.

It has there appeared in evidence, that to *ſerve a particular purpoſe*, the mortality of the mariners, and of the Negroes, had been exaggerated beyond the bounds of probability and truth: that the African trade, ſo far from being deſtructive to the lives of Britiſh ſeamen, in the degree aſſerted, is, in fact, a nurſery for training up men to that uſeful profeſſion.* That this trade is carried on as much

* For it is in this trade alone that thoſe, who are deſirous of embracing a ſea life, at an age too advanced to commence an apprenticeſhip, can find employment; as the crews of veſſels in any other trade, conſiſt of ſeamen and apprentices only: but in this, one half at leaſt of each ſhip's

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much to the eaſe and comfort of thoſe that are the ſubjects of it, and alſo of thoſe who conduct it, as it is poſſible for human ingenuity to deviſe. That the ſhips employed in it, are ſo peculiarly conſtructed for the accommodation of the Negroes, as to be unſuitable for any other trade. That the opinion, which has been induſtriouſly propagated, of theſe ſhips being unequal to the numbers which were ſaid to be crowded in them, is groundleſs; as appears from a ſurvey and admeaſurement of them, by an experienced naval officer appointed by government.* That on the voyage from Africa to the Weſt Indies, the Negroes are well fed, comfortably lodged, and have every poſſible attention paid to their health, cleanlineſs,

ſhip's company is compoſed of landſmen, young men, who in two or three voyages acquire as much profeſſional knowledge as qualifies them afterwards for any ſtation of a ſea life.

* In every inſtance of thoſe ſhips which delivered their cargoes at the Britiſh Weſt India iſlands, it appears that (to evade *a duty upon tonnage* which is paid there) their tonnage was reported at the cuſtom houſes, at *one third* or more *below their real burthen*.

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and convenience. That the captain's cabbin is appropriated to the uſe of ſuch as are ſick; where proper care, and medical aid, are duly adminiſtered to them; and that, by an admirable regulation, the emoluments of the captains and officers, employed in this trade, are connected with, and depend upon, the health and good condition of thoſe whom they have the charge of conveying. The mode of obtaining Negro ſlaves in Africa, has been demonſtrated to be in a way perfectly fair, and equitable; by a barter with the natives. The crime of *kidnapping*, as it is termed, with which the traders to Africa have been reproached, proves to be extremely unfrequent: for the African committee, whoſe buſineſs it is to take cognizance of ſuch an offence, and for which the law inflicts a heavy penalty, have reported, that only *one inſtance* of it has come before them in the courſe of near *forty years*. It has alſo been ſhewn, that, in conſequence of this trade, many innocent lives are ſpared, that would otherwiſe be ſacrificed to the ſuperſtitious rites and ceremonies of the country; many priſoners of war exempted from torture, and death: and the puniſh-

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ment of many crimes commuted from death in Africa to life in America; and finally, that it is the lot of moſt of thoſe that are brought to the Colonies, who, generally ſpeaking, were ſlaves in their own country, only to exchange a black maſter for a white one. That the wars which have always exiſted in Africa, have no connexion with the ſlave trade, is evident from the univerſality of the practice of it between communities in a ſavage ſtate. The oldeſt writers, as *Leo*, and others, have repreſented the Africans as living in a continual ſtate of war, and rapine, long before the commerce with Europeans was introduced among them; and no man of ſenſe can doubt but the ſame practice would ſtill continue, if no trade exiſted, and with greater frequency. Beſides the motives of ambition and reſentment, which the African has, in common with other nations of men, the turbulent and iraſcible diſpoſition of a Negro prompts him to harraſs and diſpute with his neighbour, upon the moſt trivial provocations. Lured by the love of plunder, before he ever ſaw an European commodity (as the value of an article depends upon the eſtima-

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tion it holds in the fancy of him who covets it), the rude productions of the country, the trinkets of gold, or ivory, &c. were as much the objects of his defire formerly, as the acquiſition of European manufactures can be at preſent. So far are the Whites from being acceſſary to theſe wars, as has been unjuſtly alleged; it is notorious, that the Europeans trading there, deprecate a war as the greateſt inconvenience that can happen to them: trade is entirely ſuſpended during its continuance; and the term of their voyages is thereby protracted much beyond the uſual time. Hence ariſes an inevitable increaſe of expence, and an additional riſk of ſickneſs and mortality, which cannot be compenſated by a few additional ſlaves, that may occaſionally be brought to market in conſequence of it. The aſſertion, that farther ſupplies of ſlaves from Africa, are not neceſſary to the cultivation of our iſlands, ſcarcely merits a ſerious refutation. It is dictated by the ſame miſtaken policy, that preferred the wilds of Canada, at the cloſe of a former war, to the poſſeſſion of the truly valuable Sugar Iſlands; which, after being wreſted from our enemies

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and rivals, at the expence of much blood and treaſure, were again reſtored to them in an evil hour. But are no new ſettlements to be made, nor old ones to be extended? Is induſtry to be limited, and improvement prohibited, in the moſt valuable of all our foreign poſſeſſions; where a ſupply from propagation alone, adequate to the ſervices required, is never to be expected. And are princely territories, millions of property, to be hazarded upon crude experiments? of whoſe ſucceſs ſome few may poſſibly hope; but of whoſe failure few indeed can have a doubt?

How the Negroes, occupied in the Colonies, are now treated, remains next to be conſidered; and cannot be better related than nearly in the words of a reſpectable writer *, who has very lately favored the public with his obſervations on this ſubject.

Negro property is an object of ſuch value and importance to the proprietor, that he is diſpoſed to cheriſh it by every prudent and humane method; independent of what he owes as a man, and a Chriſtian, he feels an

* Hector M'Neil, Eſq. of Jamaica.

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adventitious affection for it, reſulting from intereſt. Hence it is, that the happineſs and miſery of Negroes, in the Weſt Indies, depend almoſt totally on themſelves. If a Negro is ſlothful or flagitious, he is, like raſcals and drones of ſociety in every well regulated community, poor and miſerable; and ſubject to correction, as a puniſhment for his own vices, and for the inſtruction of others: but, on the contrary, if he is induſtrious in his own concerns, and attentive to the intereſt of his ſuperior, mild in temper, and tractable in diſpoſition, he is entitled to indulgencies, which thouſands, even in this country, would be happy to enjoy.—The habitations of the ſlaves, on every eſtate, are ſituated near the dwelling-houſe of the owner, or overſeer; that they may be under more immediate inſpection. Theſe are, in general, comfortable and commodious; with a garden to each, encircled with plantain, banana, and orange trees: and ſtocked with roots and vegetables, for domeſtic uſes; and, even a large ſurplus to ſpare, which is carried occaſionally to market, thoſe little neceſſaries and luxuries, which they wiſh

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to enjoy. Beſides this, there is a portion of land on every eſtate, called the *Negro-grounds*, of which each ſlave is allowed as much as he can cultivate, for his own uſe. This land, from the fertility of the ſoil, requires only a ſmall portion of occaſional labour; a few hours in a week is ſufficient, and the Negro is allowed, independent of every Sunday, which he has to himſelf throughout the year, one day in a fortnight, for * eight months of it, for cultivating his grounds. In theſe habitations, there is an arrangement of apartments, and propriety of furniture; a ſupply of utenſils; and even a parade of apparel, little to be expected in the poſſeſſion of ſlaves. They have each their ſtyes of hogs, and little flocks of poultry; ſome of them reſerved for ſale, and the reſt appropriated to their evening's repaſt; this, with a comfortable night's reſt, enables them to return with vigor to the next morning's work, which, however ſtrange it may ſeem, is not ſo hard as that of moſt of the laboring poor in Britain. But what

* Crop-time occupies the other four.

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renders the ſituation of the Negro peculiarly comfortable, is the proviſion made for him during ſickneſs, and old age. On the firſt ſymptoms of indiſpoſition, he is inſtantly exempted from all labor, and lodged in a houſe particularly conſtructed for the purpoſe, where he is viſited daily by a practitioner of medicine; ſupplied with freſh viands, vegetables, and even wine; attended conſtantly by a nurſe, who acts likewiſe as an under medical aſſiſtant, and is not deſired, or even allowed to reſume labor, until his health and ſtrength enable him to undergo its fatigues. Let indiſpoſition continue never ſo long; no immediate loſs, no confuſion or derangement in his little property, is the conſequence. Poverty, want, and affliction, are, by no means, the concomitants of his ſick-bed: every thing, through the aſſiſtance of his fellow-labourers and the direction of his ſuperiors, goes on, and is attended to, in the ſame way, as if he were immediately on the ſpot: his grounds are worked; his ſtock raiſed; his fruits and products carried to market, by his family or connections; and as he is amply ſupplied with every

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every neceſſary during his confinement, inſtead of being poorer, he comes out of his hoſpital a richer man than when he went in. When old age has rendered his farther exertions uſeleſs, it may be preſumed, that ſome property has been acquired, and a ſituation of comfort eſtabliſhed.—Theſe he is allowed to enjoy unmoleſted, while the uſual proportion of proviſions and clothing are annually given to him. His children, and his children's children, his friends and former fellow-labourers; his countrymen, and fellow paſſengers, are all near him, and are all ready to adminiſter their helps and conſolation. In ſhort, inſtead of wretchedneſs, and chilling penury, old age, in this ſtate, often wears away, and ſnaps its ſlender thread, as gently, and perhaps as imperceptibly, as in any country whatever. It is a fact worthy of obſervation, that a Negro ſlave in the Weſt Indies, has ſcarcely ever been heard to expreſs a deſire to return to his own country; nor, of the many who have obtained their freedom there, has one put it into practice: but, on the contrary, even newly imported Negroes, when threatened by the over-

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ſeer, upon ſome fault or neglect of theirs, to be ſent back again, are ſeriouſly alarmed at it.

To the eye of candor and moderation I addreſs this picture of what does really exiſt. But to the prejudiced,—to thoſe who are inſtigated to calumnies the moſt harſh, and proceedings the moſt unjuſt, upon the ſlighteſt grounds, I have nothing to offer, becauſe I know that the opinions they have haſtily adopted without any juſtifiable evidence, they will not quite ſo haſtily give up. No perſons are or can be ſo well informed of the facts I have before ſtated, as the planters and merchants reſident, or who have reſided in the Weſt Indies, and in whoſe view they have paſſed. But the *abolitioniſts* very artfully endeavor to put aſide every teſtimony of this ſort, by inſinuating, that they are intereſted parties, and therefore their evidence muſt be deſtitute of credibility. It is rather hard, that the teſtimony of many thouſands of Britiſh ſubjects, among whom are men of unqueſtioned integrity and diſtinguiſhed moral character, endued with as much virtue and honor as any other claſs of

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of men in the world, ſhould be leſs credible than that of hireling ſcriblers, profligate common ſailors, and the ſcum of the people. But be it ſo; and then let us appeal for the truth to other witneſſes;—to the governors, and other public officers, civil, military, and naval; who holding offices under the crown, have occaſionally lived in the Weſt Indian iſlands, and are undoubtedly competent to declare what they have obſerved. Let us alſo appeal to the acts of our colonial legiſlature, particularly *Jamaica;* where from the year 1781 to the preſent, the *General Aſſembly* have been framing and enacting a ſucceſſion of laws, all calculated to meliorate the condition of their Negroes by gradual improvements. To have done leſs, would ill have accorded with their known humanity; but to have done more, would have brought no credit to their wiſdom; for to anticipate thoſe more enlarged privileges and franchiſes, which time and maturer civilization alone muſt gradually effectuate, would be folly, or rather frenzy in the extreme. The unexceptionable atteſtations of theſe laws, theſe governors, admirals, generals, and other officers of high rank and character,

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character, we may very ſafely oppoſe to all the hearſay ſtories, paragraphs, eſſays, pamphlets and hand-bills, which the *abolitioniſts* can poſſibly ſcrape together, in ſupport of their petitions to parliament.

There now only remains of the propoſed plan of this ſhort ſketch, to point out briefly, what would be the probable, nay, the inevitable conſequence of the ſurrender of a trade, which is the connecting medium of our foreign with our domeſtic commerce. If it were taken out of the chain, of which it compoſes ſo conſiderable a link, and upon which our manufactures ſo immediately depend, every improvement in the Weſt Indian iſlands would immediately ceaſe, and a diminution of the produce of the lands, now under cultivation there, would ſhortly follow. The export of Britiſh manufactures, which to Africa and the Colonies amount to nearly three millions ſterling annually, would ſoon be reduced to nothing. The immenſe ſums, owing to this country from the Weſt Indies, would for ever remain unpaid; and innumerable bankruptcies would follow at home. From the inevitable decreaſe of the import of Weſt Indian productions, there would

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would be ſuch a deficiency of the national revenue, as the impoſition of freſh taxes, upon a people deprived of their accuſtomed reſources of opulence and induſtry, could not poſſibly replace. If we ſhould ſeek to replace this deficiency, by importing the products of the *Foreign* Weſt Indian iſlands, —this indeed would be a truly national *felo de ſe*. A decay of public credit, and a depreciation of government ſecurities, would enſue, from an inability to raiſe the public ſupplies. Our national importance would quickly decline, and be known to the next generation, only by the page of hiſtory. After ſo flagrant an act of oppreſſion and impolicy, the merchants could no longer confide in government, for the continuation of thoſe privileges which they had for ages enjoyed. This reflection would naturally throw a damp on all future enterprize, in every branch of foreign trade, as well as domeſtic manufacture; for, however the minds of ſome men may be inflamed at this moment, and however ſtrenuous they may be in oppoſition to the African ſlave trade, there muſt a time come, when every Engliſhman, who is capable of reflecting at all, will weigh the

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the injuſtice of this proceeding, abſtracted from every conſideration of feeling or policy; and will then perceive the inſtability of all commercial eſtabliſhments in a country, where the miſtaken zeal of a *few* could excite the legiſlature, ſo groſsly to invade the rights of individuals. Theſe and many other evils, muſt be reaſonably expected from the *abolition* of a trade, which we *may* relinquiſh; but which *cannot* be taken from us, by the jealouſy of foreign power: in this political ſelf- murther we muſt be our own executioners.

To prevent theſe calamities, a bill is now framing, from local knowledge and practical experience; not a bill of mere theory and ſpeculation, ſuch as lately appeared, but a bill to obviate every reaſonable complaint, and eſtabliſh every neceſſary regulation in the African trade: and that ſuch a bill may meet the approbation of every branch of the Britiſh legiſlature, and be paſſed into a law, ought to be the earneſt wiſh of every patriotic *Briton*.

FINIS.

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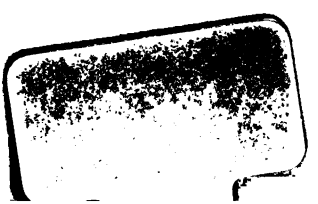

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